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SECRET SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

DOUGLAS BLACKBURN
AND CAPTAIN
W. WAITHMAN CADDELL

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SECRET SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY

DOUGLAS BLACKBURN

Document and Cipher Expert to the late Transvaal
Republic. Author of "Prinsloo of Prinsloosdorp,"
"Richard Hartley, Prospector," etc.

AND

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Chief Repatriation Magistrate for the West Rand
on the British Occupation



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1911

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FOREWORD

A FEW words of justification are perhaps necessary for adding to the books on a country that has latterly received more than its share of attention from writers of varying degrees of authority.

This volume has at least one feature not possessed by the majority of cognate works. It has not been written to attack or defend any party or policy.

The authors have been prompted by two main reasons. First, they have had peculiar, and in some respects unique, opportunities for close association with the persons and events dealt with. Secondly, the opening of a new chapter in the history of South Africa with the establishment of the Union seems to warrant a valedictory review of some of the less-known events and conditions of the Old Regime before they have become indistinct and hazy, and possibly perverted in the re-telling.

Had it not been already used, the title which most accurately would have fitted this work is, "Footnotes to History." The events recorded are largely those which in a more pretentious volume would not be incorporated in the text, yet are valuable for the light they throw on many phases of South African history that, without them, would be obscure.

The phrase "secret service" is intended to cover

those comprehensive acts and aspects of policy which for reasons political or commercial, legitimate or otherwise, were enacted purposely below the surface and out of the public ken. Of such are the questionable methods of recruiting native labour, the abnormal State-aided precautions for the protection of the gold and diamond industries, and the secret native policy—each pregnant factors in South African government that have no counterpart in other countries.

A work of this scope must of necessity be unsatisfactory in several respects both to authors and readers. Consideration for the actors, most of whom are still living, has impelled the sacrifice of much interesting matter. The odium rightly attaching to anything approximating to espionage is very real, and persons who have played the part of intelligence agents, even casually, are not usually anxious to have the fact recorded.

The authors are also fully aware that their statements must very largely be taken on trust; therefore, in order not to strain the faith of their readers, they have avoided anything that might have the appearance of mere sensationalism.

Writing after the lapse of fifteen years, it is difficult always to remember whether certain facts were acquired "in confidence" or as common property in the course of a busy journalistic and political career. Care has been taken to differentiate between what is legitimate subject for publication and what is not, and if the unpardonable sin has been committed, the authors can conscientiously plead non-intent.

FOREWORD

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Thanks are due, for assistance rendered to the authors, to Mr. F. Eliot, formerly Secretary to the Legislative Council of Griqualand West; Mr. Robert Ferguson, late Chief Detective of the Transvaal; Mr. Beattie, Chief of the Illicit Liquor Department, Transvaal; Lieut. F. de Wit Tossell, late Chief of Morality Police, Transvaal; and numerous ex-officials who prefer to remain anonymous.

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SECRET SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Early Secret Service in Cape Colony—Rarity of Cipher Dispatches—Consequences of a General's Cryptic Calligraphy—Colonials not Informers—A Boer Delilah—The Shooting of a Traitor—The Affair of Schlaagters Nek

PROBABLY the oldest and first authentic record of official secret service in South Africa exists in the form of a letter preserved in the archives of the Viljoen family of Cape Colony.

It is a letter of instruction brought out by an official of the Netherlands East India Company, dated January 17, 1687, and bearing a signature which time has rendered illegible. The recipient is exhorted, among other duties of a semi-inquisitorial character, to make special and full inquiry regarding the conduct of one Guisbert Jannissen in the matter of his dealings with shipmasters touching at Capetown.

The nature of these dealings is not disclosed in the letter, but it is reasonably safe to infer that Mynheer Jannissen was gravely suspected of practising an art which nearly 250 years later formed one of the chief counts in the Uitlanders' indictment against the officials of the Transvaal Government.

Documentary evidence of secret service is the rarest form of historical record unearthed by the delver among

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old and rare manuscripts. The reason is obvious. The importance of such a writing, and the danger of its getting into the hands of the unauthorised, render it imperative that it should be destroyed as soon as its contents have been mastered and utilised.

There is a story in one of the military novels of the Charles Lever type and period of a British dispatch rider boasting to a French officer how often he had eaten his dispatches when capture seemed imminent.

"I never wait till then," answers the Frenchman. "I always eat mine as soon as I get out of sight of our sentries. I can then face the prospect of capture with courage and calmness."

Although the archives of Cape Colony contain a vast accumulation of profoundly interesting matter which, broadly, might come under the generic description of secret dispatches—they being mainly private instructions from the chiefs of the old Dutch East India Company to their representatives—they scarcely come within the category of the type of secret dispatch handled by the agents principally dealt with in these pages.

The rarest form of secret communication in the official archives of Cape Colony is the cipher dispatch. It has been somewhat cruelly suggested that, as the art of writing was very little known and practised in the land in those days, there was no necessity for intensifying the difficulty of deciphering a written communication.

It was a mess-table joke against a popular Colonial Governor, whose calligraphy was of the spider's web order, that his dispatches were frequently sent to the experts under the impression that they were in a new cipher. When, later, precaution would have justified the sending of a certain dispatch in cipher, a young officer had the temerity to remark: "Write it in your usual hand, sir; no one will be able to read it."

This was the starting of a feud between the two officers,

which ended, years later, in a calamity to both of them and the Colony in particular.

In the early days of political stress in the Cape Colony, a system of secret intelligence was developed automatically, particularly at the period of the British occupation, when the Boers were becoming restless, and the growing discontent manifested itself in more or less open meetings at remote farms, and secret mutterings in the market-place, or at the great quarterly religious gathering, *Nachtnaal*.

No Government, good or bad, has ever been without the assistance of that individual alternatively described, according to the point of view, as a renegade and traitor, or as "loyally disposed." And here it may appropriately be remarked that on the whole South Africa has been agreeably free from that subject of universal execration—the Informer. It is justifiable to say that the men and women of the South African Colonies who have acted as secret conveyers of information to governments or their representatives have, in the vast majority of cases, been actuated by something sufficiently far removed from sordid motives to warrant its being accounted to them for righteousness, if not for the purest patriotism.

This is particularly true of the men—and women—who assisted both sides during the last Boer War. The writers have had opportunity for investigating many cases in which charges of renegadism and treachery have been made against persons, both Boer and Briton, and have had the satisfaction of finding that in practically every instance the action of the accused was justified by the comity of nations, by the eternal law of self-preservation. The underlying impulse was a firm conviction that the assistance proffered would be beneficial to the more righteous cause.

At the same time, it should be placed on record that the principals on both sides gave no encouragement to the mere common informer and spy. It is true grave

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errors of judgment were made in this connection in a few deplorable instances, but on balance dishonour is equal. Against the intimidation and corruption of British-born telegraph officials by certain Boer Commandants may be fairly set off that colossal blunder, the institution of the corps of "Hands Uppers" by the British General Commanding.

There are many good stories from the late Boer War illustrating that phase of espionage which, by the accepted rules of the game, is "not cricket." As they bear out the moral axiom as to honesty being the best policy, virtue always rewarded and vice abased—on both sides—the narration of one or two should be edifying and in place.

During the lingering process of the guerrilla warfare in the Transvaal the Boers were provokingly successful in making unexpected swoops upon Krugersdorp and the farms in the district, and, with the connivance and assistance of the female members of their families remaining on the spot under British observation and "protection," carrying away material for the continuation of hostilities in the shape of food, clothing, horses, and—valuable information. The daring and uniform success of these raids had become general knowledge, and the officers of the garrison of Krugersdorp not unnaturally became the subjects of much chaff from military and civilians alike.

Smarting under the mortification of having twice running been badly scored off, a young captain allowed himself to take ignoble advantage of an opportunity. His duties frequently took him to an outlying Boer's farm in the occupation of a protected neutral family of females, when he made himself agreeable to a Boer maiden who was sufficiently free from racial animosity to accept the attentions with apparent gratification. The Britisher followed up his quest, and within an amazingly brief time, even measured by the rules of Boer courtship, had proposed and been provisionally accepted—the reservation

being the usual one of consent of father, and failing him, the brother.

The next step in the plan was to point out to Misjie how his prospects of promotion, and, consequently, their mutual advancement, would be ensured if he succeeded in capturing Commandant Jan Kemp, the hero of so many successful raids on the district of which he was a resident. Reluctantly the girl yielded to the suggestion that she should, as she could, play the part of Delilah; but with Afrikaner foresight pointed out that as her treachery would surely be visited by the ostracism of her people, she would require a provision for her future. Her terms were quite reasonable—a written offer and guarantee of marriage within a year, to be submitted to her next of kin, her brother, away on commando, but said by her to be favourably disposed towards Rooineks.

To his eternal discredit the officer gave the required guarantee, and in the course of a week Misjie announced that her brother approved, and had, in addition, provided a plan for the capture of the elusive Jan Kemp.

It was very simple. It happened that the captain owned one of the best horses in the district, and that Jan Kemp had fixed his appreciative eye on it. That horse was to be the bait. The captain was to call at Misjie's farm with his best horse and a couple of his fellow officers equally well mounted. The horses were to be hobbled at a certain spot, where they would be found by Kemp, who would be easily captured when going off with his loot past a kloof where a dozen British soldiers would be in waiting.

The plan worked out admirably. The three officers rode up just before sundown, the bait was properly laid, and Misjie proceeded to entertain her guests while Jan Kemp should walk into the trap.

Meanwhile the troopers waited long and impatiently for Jan to come up. With Boer perversity he had gone

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in the opposite direction. But for this, as Misjie artlessly explained, they would certainly have caught him, for he had the horses with him, and only one Boer companion.

It was a long walk back to Krugersdorp in the dark of the moon, and the chaff of the camp was bad. But this annoyance was as nothing compared to the after time worry which the attorney, acting for Misjie, contrived to give the captain over that promise of marriage. Of course, it never came into Court, but there are some law-suits which are more expensive to square than to fight out, and this proved to be one of them.

And now for a story of the other side.

Oom Andries was one of the many Boers who loved peace rather than war, and being farsighted enough to see that the Rooinek was almost certain to come out on top, held his tongue until war was declared and the Uitlanders all turned out of the Transvaal, and then began to talk ferociously against every body and thing British. He was the first to apply for a new Mauser and ammunition, and spent the days walking about the Dorp fully equipped for commando, and the secret hours of the nights in cultivating a mysterious malady which had asserted itself, to the bewilderment of the doctor, each time that Andries had been called out on commando to fight Kaffirs. Being well-to-do, and, what was more important, having influence at Pretoria, he had little difficulty in getting placed upon the list of the excused. He lingered in the Dorp, inspiring the young burghers by his stories of the old fights he had taken no part in, and hustled round when detachments went to the front to make sure that no one had shirked the roll-call.

Within a fortnight Andries became suspect of the vrouws, who have a keen eye for a malingerer, and the comments made in his presence became so objectionable that he appeared less in public. Being an oprecht burgher and a deacon of the Reformed Kerk, he lived up

to his Christian character by making no reply to the slanderous things said about him, but metaphorically turned the other cheek in public. When at home he let himself go before his vrouw and daughters, and gave them a startling insight into the characters of the women who had abused him, with hints of the vengeance that he and the good Lord were preparing for those who had so despitely used him.

Sustained by the comforting knowledge of the punishment in store for his traducers, and a judiciously economical employment of such genuine sickness as the good Lord blessed his prayers with, Andries successfully dodged service on commando until the British took possession of his district. Then he came boldly into the open as an advocate of surrender, gave useful information to the British, and was rewarded by permission to ride transport and do several other little money-bringing services rightly forbidden Boers less loyally disposed.

While on a wagon journey some way into a disaffected district, Andries got mixed up in a stampede of Army mules, and was thankful for the service of the Army doctor attached to a small British force camped near. He was hospitably treated, and had the run of the camp. One windy day, on the eve of Andries' departure, a parcel of papers was blown out of one of the officers' tents. Native acquisitiveness rather than inquisitiveness prompted him to get some idea of their value before returning them. Under the tilt of his wagon he pored over the written characters, and to his surprise and delight found one document to be an offer by Frickie Oosthuizen (whom he knew and suspected of Rooinek sympathies) of certain transport material concealed on various farms in the district. The letter was addressed to an unnamed British commandant, and remarked that the bearer, also unnamed, could be trusted, as he was "my partner" in

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the transaction. It also named the price which Oosthuizen expected for his treachery.

The prescient eye of Andries saw in this document a heaven-sent exculpation. He would keep it until, as was certain sooner or later, his loyalty would be questioned by his countrymen. Then he would produce the letter, declaring that he had found it on Oosthuizen, and as a loyal oprecht burgher was on his way to show it to the first Boer commandant he met.

The chance came on the second day of his trek. Near Klerksdorp he was held up by a small Boer commando, and an explanation of his presence and occupation demanded. Luckily his wagon was empty, so there was nothing to convict him of being in the employ of the enemy except his reputation, which had travelled throughout Boerdom, as information does in the veld. He was questioned and cross-questioned by a smart young law agent from Krugersdorp, and was having a very bad time, when he bethought him of his trump card and produced it, with the lie he had invented to fit it.

The law agent read it carefully, then with a yell of jubilation proceeded to explain to the listening commando how this document was *corpus delicti* which convicted Andries better than fifty witnesses. "He is partner with the schelm Oosthuizen, and is on his way to the British commandant at Klerksdorp to betray our wagons."

Most people require little evidence to convince them of what they wish to believe, and the Boer is no exception. The commando to a man suspected Andries. The very facts that he was travelling safely through hostile country and had not been on commando were sufficient evidence of guilt. The letter was scarcely necessary, damning though it was.

Andries was put on trial for his life on the spot, the young law agent kindly acting as counsel for the defence

and prosecution, and adviser to the Commandant who pronounced sentence.

Andries was to have half an hour for praying, and then be shot.

For the first time in his life the champion wrestler in prayer at Nachtmaal failed to respond to the call. He simply howled and wept, and enumerated the names of wife and children.

Under ordinary circumstances this emotional appeal would have moved every married Boer present, but there was no sentiment left in a commando whose members had lost all their oxen and wagons. They made one concession. They deputed the oldest and most pious of their party to give Andries a send off with a prayer and a verse sung from a peculiarly inappropriate hymn—the one usually associated with the “churching” service.

But Andries continued to call for his wife and children, and, like Rachel, refused to be comforted because they were not.

The singing over, they tied Andries standing at his big wagon wheel. Six burghers looked to the magazines of their Mausers, stepped off twenty paces, took deliberate aim and fired slowly one after the other.

Andries shrieked at every shot, not because they hit him, but from surprise and fear.

The bullets all struck the ground within a few inches of his feet. The Commandant shouted and waved his sjambok threateningly at the firing party.

“Shoot straight at his treacherous heart,” he yelled.

Again the firing began. The first bullet sent up a little cloud of red dust at Andries’ feet; the second struck his left foot. He did not shriek, but stooped his head and looked at the boot with stupid surprise. Then came a howl:

“My leg! My leg!”

Eight shots followed in slow succession, each an-

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nounced by a howl of remonstrance rather than of pain, and blood was oozing from the trouser legs. A bullet had been accurately placed in each instep, and three in each shin bone, finishing with the knee-cap.

When they untied Andries he had fainted, and fell forward like a dead thing.

They laid him out in the bare veld, by the side of his wagon, and rode away towards the sunset, driving the fourteen oxen with their Kaffir voorlouper before them. When the shooting began Andries was a well-set-up, vigorous man of forty-five. A week later he crawled into Klerksdorp an old man of seventy and a cripple for life.

This story bears a remarkable likeness to one told in Cape Colony in connection with that moving tradition which never fails to excite the old Boers—the affair of Schlaagters Nek.

It occurred in the year 1816, in the early days of the final occupation of Cape Colony by the British. The change from Dutch to British ascendancy was not agreeable to many Boers, mainly of the less reputable class. Historians on both sides agree that they withdrew themselves from the obnoxious proximity of the towns and settled in what were then the back districts, and, as far as was possible, evaded the control of the governing authorities. One of the irreconcilables was Frederick Bezuidenhout—a name associated with the defiance of British authority in the Transvaal seventy-five years later. He was summoned before the Circuit Court, consisting of two Afrikaner Judges, on a charge of ill-treating a Hottentot. Having been previously summoned and threatened to shoot the messenger of the Court who served the summons, the Court authorised the messenger to call in the aid of the military. This the official did. On approaching the house, the party were hailed and ordered to stop by Bezuidenhout, who, with a half-caste Boer, was standing, rifle in hand, behind the wall of the cattle kraal.

THE BEGINNING

II

The soldiers proceeded to surround the kraal, when Bezuidenhout fired, and, running through his house, got away with his companion to the mountainous country behind.

The pair contrived to elude the search party for some time. They were eventually discovered in a cave, ordered to surrender, and then a soldier fired and Bezuidenhout was killed. It was alleged that the soldier who shot did not see his victim, and only fired by way of frightening the fugitives. However that may be, the brother of Bezuidenhout, Jan, asserted that the act was a cowardly murder, and used the incident as a justifiable pretext for inciting his neighbours to rise against the British. Secret meetings were held, and emissaries sent to the Xosa chief, Gaika, with the object of enlisting his aid and sympathy. But the chief was too wily to be made a catspaw. He not only refused assistance, but threatened to throw in his strength with the Government. The rebels then adopted the unusual weapon of a printed circular addressed to their countrymen, inviting them to rise and "expel the tyrants from the land."

These circulars were distributed secretly and only to trustworthy Boers. One of the recipients took it to Captain Andrews, who was in command of the military post in the district. That officer acted promptly. He arrested Hendrik Prinsloo, who had been appointed commandant of the rebels, and kept him a close prisoner at the military station. Two days later two hundred Boers arrived to demand the release of Prinsloo. Captain Andrews held the commando in parley while he sent for assistance, and that arriving two days later, the Boers were attacked smartly by a troop of Light Dragoons and a troop of Dutch burghers. The rebels scattered, thirty of them surrendering, the remainder taking to the mountains of the Winterberg, where they made a stand for some days, firing on the troops from their laagered wagons and

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killing a few. In the end they had to yield, and five of the ringleaders—Cornelius Faber, Andries Meyer, and three brothers named Botman—were tried at Uitenhage with fifty others on a charge of high treason before a special commission consisting of two Dutch Judges of the Supreme Court. After a long trial, thirty-nine were found guilty. The five named, with one other, were sentenced to be hanged, the remainder to various terms of imprisonment. The sixth man condemned to death had his sentence commuted to transportation for life; but the five were taken out to be hanged on the spot where they had administered the oath to their fellow-rebels.

Unfortunately, they were all hanged at the same time from the same beam, which broke under the strain, and an awful scene was the result, none of the victims being dead. The sympathetic spectators made piteous appeals to the military to reprieve the culprits, on the ground that they had already suffered sufficiently, but the officer in charge sternly refused, and the five were hanged singly.

This incident naturally caused a tremendous sensation, and was cited as an illustration of the brutal and tyrannical character of the British.

The place of the gruesome tragedy was henceforth known as *Schlaagters Nek*, inferentially the place of butchery.

Feeling among the Boers being intense, it was but humanly natural that the slightest circumstance was seized upon as a vent, if it could be interpreted into a contributory cause to the tragedy which had filled Boerdom with horror. Efforts were made to discover the person who showed the rebel circular to Captain Andrews. The name had not been elicited at the trial, though it was openly stated in Court that the information had been communicated by a "loyally disposed Boer." Suspicion fell upon many likely and unlikely persons, and for months reports came to hand of open assaults and secret injuries, physical

and otherwise, visited upon persons who had incurred suspicion of being the traitor. Doubtless many an outstanding grudge was paid off by whispering the name of the subject as the author of the great betrayal, and family feuds originated that have survived until to-day.

Among those suspected was a resident of Graaf Reinet, whose name we shall not give, for the reason that the association of any Boer name with the incident might rightly be resented by the descendants.

The haze that collects about all ancient stories has rendered the details of this one confused and indistinct, but it seems reasonably certain that the suspect was followed into the veld by an avenging party of Boers. Finding himself followed, and guessing the object of his pursuers, he took advantage of the cover afforded by a deep donga—a dry watercourse—to slip from his horse and conceal himself in some one of the nooks and crannies that abound in these miniature gorges. He appears to have unconsciously adopted the tactics erroneously attributed to the ostrich by concealing his head but leaving his legs exposed. One version of the story makes him try to escape observation by crawling into one of the burrows made by the ant-bear, and leaving his extremities exposed; while a third alleges that he was placed head first in an ant-bear hole by his captors, with the intention of leaving him to be suffocated, or probably attacked by the night-prowling beasts of prey. But whatsoever the manner of getting into the hole, the fact is pretty clear that three days later some Kaffirs found him lying in the veld with the calves of his legs riddled by bullets. He was in a terrible state of exhaustion and delirium. His legs were bare, and the terrific heat of the summer sun had scorched them horribly. His explanation was that his tormentors cut away his leg coverings in order that the pain of the wounds might be intensified by the sun; but it has also

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been reasonably suggested that the trouser-legs were cut away by the bullets that missed the flesh.

The names of the assailants were never made public by their victim, probably through fear of reprisals. About forty years later the crippled victim was arrested on a charge of shooting a Boer, who was killed by a rifle-shot while riding through a desolate mountain pass, but no conviction followed, though the circumstantial evidence is said to have been sufficiently strong to have secured the prompt condemnation of fifty Kaffirs.

CHAPTER II

TWO PIONEERS OF SECRET SERVICE

The First Transvaal Secret Agent—His Doubtful Origin—His Disinterestedness—His Slanders on Sir Owen Lanyon—Smit a Religious Crank—His Slanders have a Reactionary Effect—General Viljoen's First Conception of an Englishman—General Joubert's Mistrust of Smit—Edgson, Lanyon's Intelligence Agent—His Futile Warning of the Bronkhorst Spruit Ambuscade—The Attempted Murder of Edgson—The Mystery of the Murder of his Proxy—Smit and the Stellaland Freebooters—Sir Owen Lanyon's Suggested Black Blood—Smit and Thackeray's Father Holt

It was in the days of the first British occupation that the Transvaalers learned and practised the rudiments of political secret service. The first exponent of the art was one of their own people—a typical slim Boer of pronounced Huguenot type, though not in name.

Cornelis Smit or Smidt—for he spelt it either way—was one of those builders whose personality is lost sight of in the contemplation of his work. It is true the nature of that work was secrecy, and the avoidance of anything like publicity and advertisement, and outside a very small circle Smit got neither. It is probable that it would be difficult to find a case in which any man did so much to bring about a great political change, yet was so little known and remembered within a brief period of the attainment of his plans. It is not too much to say that this gimlet-eyed, oval-faced Afrikander, whose place of origin and full name are still subjects of doubt and uncertainty, did more to compass the overthrow of British domination in the Transvaal and the establishment for twenty years of the South African Republic, than any other man whose name is recognised among the builders.

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Smit was a born plotter and schemer. He carried in his shrewd face all the signs which the physiognomists and professional character readers tell us to look for in a plotter. It is easy to believe that the man played the game as much for love of it as from any sense of patriotism or even race prejudice. Had he been born among his Huguenot progenitors the chances are that Cornelis Smit would have been one of the successful intriguers of that period, but Fate decreed that he should carry round the fiery cross in the Transvaal, and finish up in the service and territory of the British Government, after having spent three active years in outwitting and displacing it.

Strangely little was known of Smit, even by those most in his confidence. At the time he appeared on the scene he was about twenty-five years of age, and claimed to have come to the Transvaal from the Craddock district of Cape Colony via Kimberley. There is reason to suspect that Smit had justifiable cause for reticence regarding his youth in Cape Colony. He spoke most of his Kimberley experiences, and, intentionally or not, left an impression upon his auditors that he had shared in the good things which at that period fell more equally and liberally among the struggling crowd in Diamondopolis than they have since. Although owning no farm nor even a permanent home, Smit was apparently never short of the means of existence. True, in those times a man like Smit could travel long and far in the country without need of cash; but there is reason for believing that the energetic services of this Apostle of Rebellion were absolutely voluntary and gratuitous. Certainly it is easier to suggest that he was a paid agent than to name the source of his remuneration. There was no Secret Service fund in those days—at least, not among the Boers of the Transvaal. It is a matter of record that the financing of the transport of a hundred pounds' worth of ammunition was for long beyond the

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capacity of the leaders of the rebellion. Besides, up till then the Boers were unfamiliar with that modern phase of political agitation which recognises the well-paid champion. If Smit was looking for his reward in the ultimate ascendancy of the party he schemed for, his hopes were not realised, for he never occupied any Government post in the new republic, nor is there any evidence that he sought one. Two years after Majuba—where he distinguished himself by a single-handed conflict with a Highlander, beating the bayonet with his clubbed rifle—Smit went to Cape Colony, returning to the Transvaal just before the Jameson Raid as an advocate of the Gazaland Trek.

How long Smit had been secretly fomenting hatred and hostility towards the British before the declaration of Independence is not known, but it is probable that he had been busy riding from farm to farm, from Rustenburg in the north-west to Wakkerstroom in the south-east, for long, feeling the pulse of the people, and stimulating the lethargic by stories of British oppression and unrighteousness in Pretoria.

The "goings on" at Pretoria among the staff of the late Resident Commissioner, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, his successor, Sir Owen Lanyon, and the garrison formed Smit's trump card. He was the narrator throughout the country, and probably the inventor of numerous stories reflecting upon the British officials at Pretoria. Many of them are told and believed to this day by the older Boers, and as they were principally directed against the alleged irreligion of the subjects, it is quite understandable that they were very effective in producing in the Bible-reading, religion-professing Boers strong prejudice against the blasphemous British. Grotesque perversions of harmless incidents represented the Resident's staff as Sabbath-breakers of a peculiarly energetic character. According to Smit, there was hardly a "Bible sin" which was not

perpetrated every Sunday afternoon at the Residency. Had the Commissioner and his staff been the emissaries of an Atheistic Society in a Wesleyan Methodist village, they could not have been more violently denounced in the name of religion and morality.

In taking this line of attack Smit showed his intimate acquaintance with the weakest and strongest side of his people. He also won over many predikants (ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church), who might not otherwise have taken great interest in the growing movement for ousting the British. As a matter of fact, the bulk of the predikants were disposed to favour the then existing order of things, but when appealed to by their people for corroboration of the charges of Smit and their predikantal opinions upon them, they had no alternative but to yield to the superior knowledge of the author, gained on the spot, or taking sides openly. There was only one side an Afrikaner predikant could take when challenged, and Smit had calculated on this. His own character as a God-fearing man could not but be advantaged by his denunciation of ungodliness in others, especially when the others were Rooineks.

Consciously or not, Cornelis Smit was the original instigator of that almost universal belief of the old Boers that Britishers are not only irreligious, but aggressively impious by choice as well as by nature and habit. In the after times more than one educated young Afrikaner has recalled these absurd impressions of Britishers conveyed to him by his parents, and smiled as he contrasted the real with the imaginary. In the long run, it is probable that Cornelis Smit's slanders did more good than harm to the present generation. When the young find that their elders have deceived or misinformed them on one point, they begin to doubt their claims to be oracles. General Ben Viljoen, one of the founders of the young Afrikaner party, used to say that the foundation of his scepticism

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towards the old régime was laid when he discovered that he had been deceived by a local patriarch, who described all Englishmen as resembling the drunken, brutal navvies employed upon the early railways in Cape Colony.

It is unfortunate that men of Cornelis Smit's type do not keep diaries or express themselves in print. One of the most instructive works imaginable to the future historians of South Africa would be an authoritative record of the peregrinations of this itinerant agitator during his self-imposed task of rousing the Transvaal against the British.

It appears that Smit always invested himself and his discourses with a degree of mystery, never omitting to impress upon his listeners the necessity for secrecy and silence. This trait in his character rather suggests the *poseur*, and helps out the theory that he was more interested in the manner than the matter of his mission—that, in fine, he was a plotter from predilection rather than from just cause. This is the view the late General Joubert seems to have taken of the man, for he treated him very cavalierly, receiving his reports with doubt or indifference, and once at Potchefstroom openly advising him to go back to his *vrouw* at Craddock, adding significantly: "If you dare!"

It is possible that the Boer triumvirate did not realise the potency of Smit's quiet advocacy of resistance among the farmers. Themselves feeling strongly, and being at the centre of British assertiveness, they could not imagine a Boer in the remoter regions needing the stimulant of Smit's eloquence to bring him to a sense of his condition. Smit was the pioneer professional agitator. The people were not yet ready for him, and in consequence he shared the fate of most prophets who get ahead of their times. He was misunderstood and unappreciated by the powers that be, and his reward was neglect.

There was, however, one man who not only assessed

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Smit at something near true value, but considered him important enough to checkmate, if possible. That man was Arthur B. Edgson, keeper of the store and canteen at Mulder's Drift, on the Crocodile River, some thirty miles south of Pretoria and on one of the highways from Potchefstroom and Heidelberg to the capital.

Edgson was a young Englishman who had originally come out to Africa with the object of accompanying Stanley in the capacity later filled by the two brothers Pocock. At the last moment he backed out of his agreement, drifted to the Transvaal, and having married one of the daughters of Mulder of the Drift, settled down as a hotel and storekeeper, eventually becoming prosperous.

Although now one of the people by marriage and business interest, Edgson retained his British sympathies. As a storekeeper at the very hub of the political wheel, he was in a position to know what was going on in Boerdom, and soon became aware of the activities of Cornelis Smit, who frequently made the store at the Drift his abode. Edgson at length saddled up and rode into Pretoria, where he interviewed Sir Owen Lanyon, the Administrator, and told his story. It is now a matter of history, and too late to regret or moralise upon, that Sir Owen refused to take a serious view of the Boer attitude of discontent and menace. He listened, smiled grimly, even laughed good-naturedly, for Sir Owen was more human than he has been pictured, and advised Edgson not to attach any weight to the gossip or doings of an irresponsible creature like Smit. In fine, he chaffed his informant over a cigar and whisky, just as he did on the eve of that fateful December 20th, 1880, when Edgson again rode to Pretoria to announce that the troops on the march from Lydenberg to Pretoria under Colonel Anstruther would be ambuscaded at Bronkhorst Spruit.

Sir Owen laughed merrily.

"You're a good chap, Edgson; but I think you see an

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enemy behind every bush. Besides, you don't know Anstruther. Your Boer friends will have to get up early to catch him napping. Have another whisky?"

The Boers were up early next morning.

There is a story worth telling of Edgson's shadowing of Smit at this period.

In keeping with his unnecessary display of theatrical business, Smit was in the habit of making rendezvous with the Boers he was trying to influence, at absurdly inconvenient times and places. One day Edgson watched Smit leave a farmhouse on foot and proceed into the veld, skirting and dodging among the boulders and generally taking cover in a puzzling and meaningless way. Curious to get at the secret, Edgson followed, and had a rough and wearying time in keeping pace with his quarry and out of sight. After an hour or more of this he became conscious that a third person was taking a hand in the game, except that he and not Smit appeared to be the objective. While endeavouring to watch the newcomer Edgson exposed himself to Smit, who took fright and disappeared in a donga.

Edgson never knew who his stalker was until informed by the present writer on the authority of the mysterious third person. He was Mr. Willie Struben, C.M.G. Riding from Pretoria he had caught sight of Edgson performing his part of the game, and, having for some time suspected him, resolved to follow up the spoor. He left his horse and followed Edgson for an hour. Then, finding that the hunted had spotted him, he spent another hour in hunting his horse, and returned to Pretoria more puzzled than ever regarding Edgson's motive. Oddly enough, Struben never saw the object of Edgson's chase, neither did Smit see Struben.

The finish up of this trio forms a study in the unexpected.

Edgson, the British loyalist of 1880, was a "Boer

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suspect " in 1900, and had his famous store and hotel at Mulder's Drift destroyed by order of the local British Commandant. Cornelis Smit became "a Rhodes man," while Willie Struben, the hunter of the Britisher, Edgson, in 1880, and an ardent official under the later Boer regime, is to-day a C.M.G. The treatment meted out to Edgson was strongly resented by every Britisher who knew him as a credit to his race and the pioneer Briton in the district that he made his home for nearly thirty years.

Later on Arthur Edgson was the subject of a dramatic hunt, which, if successful, might have had considerable effect upon the history of the retrocession of the Transvaal.

He had become suspect of the Boers. His frequent journeys to Pretoria and his known British sympathies were increasingly commented upon by the more active members of the insurrectionary Boer party, and Edgson received more than one hint that trouble was awaiting him. One night, just after the famous meeting at Paardekraal, a few miles distant, where the Boers declared their independence, a party of men rode up to Edgson's store and noisily demanded admittance. Edgson was away at a neighbouring farm, and the only white man in the place was an itinerant mason. He went out upon the stoep in response to the knocking, and was immediately set upon by the party. At least, that is the supposition, for his battered body, with a bullet through it, was found by the Kaffir servants.

Who the murderers were was a matter of suspicion rather than knowledge. The victim was the unintentional proxy for Edgson. That it was the storekeeper who was sought was fairly well established by the fact that, that night and early next morning, a party of Boers visited several farms at which Edgson was supposed to be. He passed the greater portion of the night standing neck deep in the Crocodile River, hiding among the boulders. Several times the party came so near that Edgson thought him-

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self discovered, but just as he was fearing that the cold would compel him to quit his hold, the Boers rode off.

It was always a subject for discussion whether Edgson recognised the party, and for cautionary reasons forebore denouncing them; or whether his explanation was reasonable—that he could not see distinctly owing to the darkness and the necessity for keeping his head at the level of the water, and was prevented from recognising the voices by the noise of the torrent.

There was a dramatic little legend connected with the Mulder's Drift murder and the hunting of Edgson as a British spy. Some sixteen years after the great adventure Edgson built and conducted an hotel at Krugersdorp. It promptly became a resort for the leading Boers who visited the Dorp. There was one, however, who persistently avoided the Grand Hotel, except during the period of the quarterly religious festival known as *Nachtmaal*, at which this old Boer was a regular and devout attendant. During the week the festival lasted the old man made a point of visiting Edgson's hostelry and spending money liberally. This fact was interpreted by the wise ones learned in such matters to mean that the old man, under temporary religious inspiration, was making atonement for some wrong he had done Edgson. Long before he manifested this odd method of requital the old man had been generally named as the author of the Mulder's Drift murder. Since his death the cloak has been thrown on the shoulders of another who carries it less unostentatiously.

Smit was for a time suspected of complicity, if not the leadership, in this atrocity, but he satisfied Edgson of his innocence, and that may be accepted as good cause for at least a suspension of judgment.

It has been laid to the blame of the British Government that no serious effort was made to bring to justice the perpetrators of this cowardly murder, but the fact is

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overlooked that at the time war had actually begun, and from then until the reoccupation of the country twenty-three years later the British Government had no opportunity or right of interference.

The subject was a matter of frequent and acrimonious discussion for many years, and it is only introduced here because of its connection with Cornelis Smit, and to give the memory of that strange character the benefit of the doubt that does exist. The charge against Smit probably owed much of its weight to the fact that another Boer named Smidt was reasonably supposed to have been with the party on the stoep that night, and once or twice when under the influence of liquor he boastfully announced his participation. Fortunately for himself he had a reputation as a liar of unequalled magnitude. Cornelis Smit has been also named in connection with the murder of Mr. Honey by the Stellaland freebooters, but there is sufficient evidence that he was not in that part of the country at the period, and certainly not with the party headed by that other history-maker, "Groot" Adriaan de la Rey, whose last years were spent in a vigorous effort to clear his character from the odium of the suspicion of having been party to the shooting of Honey.

As will be shown in due course, each of the most famous murders committed in the Transvaal resulted in suspicion falling and remaining on more than one person, and in no case has the mystery been cleared up.

There was another barbed shaft in the quiver of Smit which he used with almost as much effect against Sir Owen Lanyon as the charges of irreligion against the staff. It happened, unfortunately, that the Administrator was unusually dark complexioned, with the black, coarse-textured hair seen in persons of mixed blood. The Boers have an ineradicable prejudice against a suggestion of black blood. Therefore Smit found it easy to drive home his other and uncorroborated charges, by declaring that

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the British Government had purposely insulted the Boers by sending a man as Administrator who was actually nothing better than a Kaffir. As many of the Boers had seen Sir Owen, Smit invariably called upon them to support his slander. To Britishers who know nothing of the intensity of the colour prejudice in South Africa it would probably be difficult, if not impossible, to convey an adequate idea of the effect upon the average Boer when assured on such incontrovertible authority that he was governed by a Kaffir. To this day the stupid story is repeated and believed in many a Transvaal Boer homestead.

In one striking feature Cornelis Smit bore a resemblance to that picturesque type of secret political agent, of whom Father Holt in Thackeray's "Esmond" is the standing example. He kept the religious side of his mission uppermost. His discourses in farm houses and to the few gathered together in the undisturbed solitudes of the veld always resembled sermons. He appealed to the Bible largely, drawing parallels and justification for throwing off the yoke of the British oppressor from the characters familiar to the readers of the Old Testament. He is said to have been as eloquent in his exhortations as a predikant. When, sixteen or seventeen years later, he conducted his campaign as agent in advance for those engineering the trek to Gazaland he adopted much the same style of argument as he probably did when enthusing the Back-veld Boers against the British. He referred copiously to the Israelites and their trek to the Promised Land, and went so far as to suggest that Gazaland was very near the scene of that great historical Exodus which has always had a peculiarly real hold upon the imagination of the Boer.

CHAPTER III

THE ILLICIT LIQUOR TRADE

The I.L. Detective Department—The Liquor Scourge—Peruvians the Monopolists—Their Trade Methods—Enormous Profits—Attitude of Licensing Magistrates—Heavy Penalties Inoperative—How Prosecutions Failed—Some Mining Authorities Oppose Liquor Abolition—An Incorruptible Public Prosecutor—The Muzzling of Officials—Murder of I.L. Detectives—The Trapping System—Police-proof I.L. Canteens—Trap-Boys—Open Bribery of Officials—The Compound Manager—Huge Profits of Native Mine Police—A Night with an I.L. Poacher

No secret service department under any Government had more justification for its inception, and less for its continuance, than that formed by the late Transvaal Executive for dealing with that scourge of the mining industry and of the Kaffirs—the illicit liquor traffic.

Under the laws of all the South African Colonies and States it has long been a serious offence to supply natives with intoxicating liquor. It was not so much in the interest of the native as from motives of self-protection that the whites enacted these laws. If ever a temperance advocate ran short of arguments in support of the allegation that alcohol can be a curse, he would need no more after investigating the case of liquor versus the South African native.

But the Transvaal illicit liquor detective department was inaugurated out of regard, not for the ethical, but for the business side of the matter. The mining authorities awoke to the commercial and economic fact that the natives' taste for intoxicating liquor cost their industry many thousands of pounds a year as a consequence of labour lost and deteriorated by drunkenness. The Cham-

ber of Mines published at intervals formidable tables of statistics showing the loss to the industry, and doubtless, even making allowance for the exaggeration of partisanship, those figures were startling, and warranted drastic action in the shape of the repression of native drunkenness. It was not uncommon for 10 per cent. of the 5,000 natives employed on a mine to be unfit for work on Monday morning after the debauch which the day of rest afforded opportunity for. On the Monday following the monthly pay day the percentage has been doubled on certain mines where the illicit liquor trade flourished more luxuriantly. Apart from the temporary loss of labour caused by Sunday excesses, the mines suffered considerably from the effect of crimes committed by natives under spirituous influence. Assaults, tribal fights and an occasional murder were directly attributable to native drunkenness, and on one mine alone during one year 1,300 working days were lost by native employees having to attend the magistrates and other courts as witnesses or principals in cases arising out of drink crimes and offences.

To the general reader unacquainted with the local conditions, it may appear puzzling that a special secret service department, costing many thousands a year, should be needed to detect crime which was so rampant and undisguised. To those on the spot possessing the slightest sense of humour the existence of the Illicit Liquor Department was a piece of comic opera buffoonery, for the simple reason that everybody knew the source of the illicit liquor supply, save those employed to discover it.

To the credit of Boer and Briton, and, it may be added, of the representatives of every reputable civilised country, the creatures engaged in the infamous business of physically and morally ruining the natives, corrupting white officials, and robbing the mining shareholders were rarely, if ever, others than the race strangely described

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as Peruvians. No one seems to have offered a satisfactory explanation of the origin of this name, but it is always employed to mean the low-class Russian and Polish Jews, who form so large a part of the population of the Witwatersrand.

Their illicit business was mainly carried on through the medium of a legally licensed canteen on or near a mine, which licence was granted for the sale of liquor to whites only. How far the licensing authorities must have winked—to use no stronger word—at the deliberate evasion of the law may be guessed from the fact that in scores of cases licences were granted to canteens situate on spots where the greatest possible number of whites likely to use the place would not be sufficient to pay the weekly wage of the Kaffir kitchen boy. A licence was granted to a canteen on a derelict mine in charge of a caretaker, and three miles out on the veld. The licensee would require to sell £1,000 worth of liquor per annum at ordinary profits to make a bare living out of the place. Yet, he contrived to retire in four years with a competency, and find a purchaser of the goodwill and the tin shanty for £1,000.

One of the licensing magistrates once mildly objected that there was not sufficient white trade to justify the granting of this licence. The Attorney for the applicant proceeded gravely to reply that his client did not expect to make great profits yet, but was awaiting the time when the abandoned mine might be resuscitated, and probably fifty or even a hundred whites employed.

The questioning magistrate made a few calculations on his blotting pad.

"I figure it out that every one of those miners will have to spend all his wages at the canteen in order to enable the proprietor to come out clear."

"Not quite all, but very nearly," was the naïve reply.

The licence was granted *nem. con.*

The time and necessity for irony and veiled suggestion are gone. Everybody knows that the licence for sale to whites was a farce, that a white trade was not desired for the very good reason that more profit could be and was made out of selling poisonous liquor to a dozen Kaffirs than decent stuff to fifty whites. It is safe to say that no continuous and established business in the world can show such enormously disproportionate profits as the Illicit Liquor Trade. The stuff sold was nominally a raw spirit based on the refuse of sugar cane and German potato spirit, but doctored by the wholesale purchaser according to trade recipes handed from one to another. The maximum cost to the retailer was tenpence a pint. The minimum price to the native five shillings. When the stuff was smuggled into the compound, or sold from a donga in the veld at night, the Kaffir was charged double for the extra risk, and when he had the money he paid what was demanded without demur.

But if the profits were great, so were the risks. At least, they would have been had not the I.L. gang been past masters in the art of avoiding conviction.

The penalties provided by the law sounded almost Draconian, a point taken advantage of both by defending solicitor and magistrate, by insisting on the necessity for strict proof of every count in the charge. The person—not necessarily the licensee—selling to a native, on conviction could be fined £15, £25 and £75, and be imprisoned for periods ranging from three to twelve months. Later, an amendment of the law increased the penalty and gave magistrates a little more freedom and discretionary power than they had before; but—and this is worthy of note—the licence was never endangered. Assistants were convicted again and again of selling to natives at the same canteen, but they paid their fines, or now and then, when the case was a very bad one, went to prison by arrangement with their employer, and the

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licensee continued the business with a new assistant who was prepared to "do" a short term of imprisonment for a financial consideration if occasion arose.

Among the charges of official corruption brought against the old Kruger party many were doubtless exaggerated, and even baseless; but it is hard to conceive any person, having average acquaintance with the conditions prevailing on the Rand mines prior to the late war, pretending to believe that the illicit liquor traders had not successfully incapacitated the special and elaborate machinery designed for their destruction.

The newspapers of the period abound with reports of futile prosecutions for illicit liquor selling, which were rendered impotent by circumstances that only the most extravagant imagination could ascribe to legitimate and reasonable cause. Here are a few of the most common causes of the failure of the police and Public Prosecutor to prove their case:

(1) Disappearance of the native detective sent to trap the seller, and naturally the principal witness for the prosecution.

(2) Failure of trap-boy to identify with certainty the seller of the liquor.

(3) Failure of the white detective to identify the marked coins given the trap-boy for the purchase of the liquor.

(4) Serious discrepancy between the statements of white detectives on important matters of fact, such as the time of the committal of the offence, the exact part of the canteen where the liquor was served, etc.

(5) The substitution of ginger beer, or even water, for the liquor seized at the moment of arrest and sealed and detained as evidence by the police. In five years over twenty such cases occurred in various courts on the Rand. On the bottles being opened in court they were found to contain non-intoxicating liquors, although the detectives making the capture had sworn to having sealed the bottles

as they were brought out of the canteen by the trap-boy sent in to make the purchase.

Another recorded case in support of the allegation that the officials connived at the escape of monied offenders was that of the notorious king of the illicit liquor trade on the West Rand. More than twenty times was he prosecuted in person or through his employees, but never was a conviction obtained, the case invariably breaking down on some frivolous technicality or purposely arranged flaw.

It became noticeable that while the old-established wealthy I.L.'s always escaped, the number of convictions of others was quite numerous, and on paper, in statistical form, gave an agreeable impression that the law was being well vindicated in spite of a few annoying failures. It was also noticeable to those in a position to read and mark the significance that the "illicits" convicted were invariably the small fry, new entrants to the business, and, in consequence, rivals to the old-established kings. On more than one occasion the information against these interlopers and poachers on the preserves of the kings was laid by the big dealers, and once the Rand was made merry by the sight of the most notorious and wealthy of the gang appearing in court as a witness—and a highly indignant witness, actuated by a strong sense of duty—against a miserable co-religionist who had been caught in the act of selling half a bottle of alleged whisky to a native from a stock consisting of three bottles.

The difficulties above indicated did not conduce to lighten the task of the Illicit Liquor Detective Department, and to them must be added another and more potent one.

It was an open secret that the mining authorities were not unanimous on the question of this drinking by natives, and it was more than once publicly asserted in

print and speech that the complaints and denunciations of the Chamber of Mines were only so many sops to the goody-goody shareholders on the spot and the more conscientious ones at home. There were not lacking men of weight and character who boldly declared that it was the opportunity for obtaining drink which alone induced the Kaffir to accept employment on the mines, and it must be confessed that facts and circumstances often supported this view.

There were two adjacent mines on the West Rand whose compound managers represented respectively the pro- and anti-liquor view. On the mine of one, liquor was easily obtainable, and the roll of incapables on Monday morning was often appalling; but, except on Mondays, there was never a shortage of labour, while recruits came to the mine from every part of the sub-continent, and, what was most significant, the proportion of "boys" who re-engaged was extraordinary.

On the other mine the illicit liquor seller had short shrift. He was watched and harried by a vigilant and merciless staff of private detectives and an almost ferociously ardent anti-liquor compound manager. Drunkenness on that property was as rare as virtue in a gambling hell; so was superfluous labour. The mine was always short handed, and it was a standing joke that no boy who left ever returned, except as a deserter in custody.

Just after that landmark in the history of the Rand, the Jameson Raid, the authorities at Pretoria moved in response to the complaints of the Chamber of Mines, and reformed and revived that section of the police which nominally had oversight of the illicit liquor offenders. For a time something approaching a reign of terror was inaugurated along the reef, and the canteen keepers became amusingly circumspect, regarding with grave suspicion every stranger who entered or approached their premises. A number of prosecutions followed, and

a fair proportion of convictions was secured. But the alarm of the "illicits" quickly subsided, and within three months drunkenness in the compounds was as prevalent as ever and the kings of the business carried once more with defiant ostentation the outward and visible signs of their inward prosperity.

About this time Dr. Fritz Krause, who during the late war was the subject of a prosecution in England for a political offence, was appointed Public Prosecutor of Johannesburg, and immediately came a noteworthy change in the courts over which he exercised influence. Prosecutions of "illicits" were not quite so numerous as under the old regime, but they were more certain. Convictions became the rule; escape on technicalities and flaws and police blundering the exception. The "illicits" realised that they had a firm, resolute official to deal with who was incorruptible and unsqueezable. The proof of this lies in the fact that so long as he was a public servant he was a poor man. It was not till he resumed his private practice at the Bar that he began to make money.

There was at the same time a sweeping out in the detective department, and results began to show the past need and justification of reform there.

A combination so strong and unscrupulous as the illicit liquor confederacy was not likely to yield without a struggle. Their new method of coercing the officials, whom they now feared to approach with bribes, was conceived and carried out with diabolical ingenuity.

The average civil servant on the Rand was notoriously improvident and reckless in money matters, and it was more than once openly asserted by an outspoken Johannesburg magistrate that every other policeman was in the hands of his creditors. This might sound too wide a generalisation, but it may be accepted as a fact that the majority of all the officials, married or single, lived

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beyond their means and were in a condition of chronic impecuniosity. The explanation was simple. First, the ease with which credit could be obtained, owing to the prevalent system of paying wages monthly; secondly, the cheapness of money, and the bucolic simplicity and inexperience in money matters of the young Afrikanders from whom the officials were recruited.

Dr. Krause very early in the chapter let it be distinctly understood that he was waiting for an opportunity to catch and make an example of any policeman taking a bribe from the liquor people, and there is no doubt that the threat had a deterrent effect for some time. But money will always purchase brains, and the "illicits" paid a disreputable but brainy law agent £100 for suggesting an effective plan of campaign that would end in the surrender unconditionally of the now bribery-proof officials.

It was, in a limited area like the official circle of the Rand, easy enough to find out the financial standing of any man. A private report by this agent more than confirmed the allegation of the landdrost who described every other policeman as in the hands of his creditors. There were less than a dozen officials connected with the suppression of the liquor scourge who could not have been lodged in the debtors' prison if their creditors cared to move.

Within a week of the presentation of that report, a number of summonses for debts were served upon detectives and officials. In the majority of cases the claims were paid on demand. It was not difficult for an official, particularly a policeman, to borrow a few pounds from some possible and probable future subject of his official attention. The law agent had reckoned on this, and after issuing several writs against the same man in quick succession, compelling the victim to exhaust his borrowing capacity, the heavy artillery would be brought into

action. Another law agent—the confederate and tool of number one—would approach the much-writted official and suggest a simple scheme for straightening out the complicated financial position.

“If you will make out a complete list of all your creditors, I will arrange to pay them off on your account. All you have to do is to sign a bit of paper agreeing to repay me in, say, a month. Of course, I don’t expect you to pay me in that time, for I know you can’t, but I will renew the bill for another month, and so on till you can clear off your debt. If you don’t agree to this, every creditor will be suing you, and the law costs alone will ruin you. Besides, the Government dare not keep an official whose name is always in the newspapers for debt; and don’t forget Fritz Krause.”

This speech rarely failed to effect its purpose. The law agent was hailed as a benefactor; the simple Afrikaner signed any document placed before him, and for a month rejoiced in a freedom from financial worry that he had not known since he joined the force. Punctually on the day due, a letter would be received from a law agent in Pretoria, or some place inconveniently distant from Johannesburg, expressing surprise that the bill had not been met, and demanding immediate settlement under pain of prompt legal action. To his benefactor the frightened official would hurry for an explanation, and got it, in a version in the Taal of the old familiar money-lender’s trick that is as old as bill discounting itself.

The friendly agent was pained and surprised at what had occurred. It was true that he had parted with the bill to the person now clamouring for his pound of flesh, but only because his generosity in settling the official’s debts had driven him on to the rocks. He had transferred the bill on the distinct understanding that it was not to be presented till the debtor was in the humour to

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pay, but the present holder had turned out a scoundrel, and having the law on his side would take full advantage of it. What was the remedy? Easy enough. There was a good fellow who would undertake to hold the bill for three, six, even twelve months—on one condition. He was running a canteen, and had been very much worried by certain officials of whom the debtor was one.

Is there any occasion to narrate the sequel?

Not in every case did the process prove satisfactory. To their credit, a number of officials defied the illicit gang, and put extra energy into their work. But they paid the price in some form sooner or later, and generally sooner.

One of the most courageous and successful of the liquor detectives, who had terrorised the trade in the East Rand, was found one morning on the high road. A stick had been thrust through the spokes of his bicycle, and while on the ground, probably unconscious from the fall, a bullet had been fired at scorching range at his face. The assassins were never discovered.

Again and again were members of the department assailed by unseen foes in the dark while proceeding on their bicycles across the veld. The plan of attack was strangely uniform. The would-be murderer lay in the long grass by the edge of the narrow track, and threw the passing cyclist by thrusting a stick into the spokes of the wheel, generally escaping in the darkness before the victim could recover from the shock.

It is, perhaps, fair to say that the illicit loudly repudiated any connection or sympathy with these crimes, and skilfully threw the responsibility upon the Government. "The offenders," they said, "are undoubtedly natives who resent being prevented from purchasing liquor, to which they are as much entitled as white men."

This view of the case had many supporters among leading mining men.

There was something approaching the ludicrous in the way the law was carried out by its representatives in the detective department. It was the commonest thing for two detectives and a couple of native trap-boys to proceed on a raid upon a canteen with divided forces. One of the white officials would be honestly eager to secure a conviction, the other being under the thumb of a "squared" superior, or in the pay of the illicit, equally keen on thwarting his colleague. The trap-boys might be actuated by the same motives—one sympathetic with the law, the other with the canteen keeper. As a rule the native detective was more loyal and reliable than his white master, for the reason that he frequently had an old grievance to adjust. The trap-boy literally carried his life in his hands. If detected, or even suspected, he would be brutally assaulted by the canteen keeper, and was fortunate if he escaped being half-killed by his fellows, who regarded the police with as much detestation as the canteen keeper did. Only now and then did the story of the fate of the trap-boy come out in court. A maimed Kaffir more or less did not count on the Rand, and the detectives engaged in a case were not disposed to emphasise the fact that their trap-boy took all the risk, while they looked on from a safe vantage point.

A common trick of the canteen keeper who suspected a trap-boy was to supply him with a tot of liquor in a thin glass, and insist on his drinking it on the spot. Then, as his lips touched the liquor, a blow on the glass would destroy all evidence of the law-breaking and gash the native's mouth and face so as to mark him plainly for the rest of his life.

On one of the few occasions when the perpetrator of such an outrage had to answer for it in court, his advocate put in the defence that the act was justifiable, since it prevented a native from obtaining an illicit drink and

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punished the wrongdoer. The plea held, and the accused was acquitted.

A collection of the points and objections raised and admitted in the proceedings against illicit liquor sellers would make reading so startling and humorous that it is questionable whether the public would accept the work as seriously meant.

Money being plentiful, the illicit gang always retained the services of the ablest lawyers obtainable. The magistrates, being usually without legal training, were no match for the astute professional; the result was many a ruling which flew in the face of both law and equity. As a matter of fact, the odds against a conviction in a liquor case were always enormous. The principal evidence being that of a native, was easily discredited under a rigorous and merciless cross-examination, and it must be admitted that the majority of the white detectives made poor and unconvincing witnesses. On the other side purchased and perjured testimony was the rule, and the magistrate who had the courage would take this fact into consideration in assaying the value of the evidence for the defence. But always, and all through a case which depended principally upon native evidence, he was oppressed and influenced by the knowledge that public feeling was dead against convicting a white man on the word of a black. Hence the accused so often got the benefit of the doubt.

Another cause of failure was the looseness with which the law had been drawn. Probably there is not on the Statute Book of the Transvaal a law so badly constructed as that forbidding the supplying of intoxicating liquors to natives. One can excuse the irritated champions of temperance who suggest that it was framed for the purpose of being evaded.

Naturally, the law required absolute proof of two things not so easy to establish as they might appear.

First, it had to be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the court that a native had been supplied with, and was actually in possession of, intoxicating liquor, which he may or may not have drunk; secondly, that the person who supplied the liquor was the one before the court.

On this latter point there were more breakdowns than on any other. The interior of most of the illicit canteens was specially arranged to make it difficult for the native to see the person serving him. In some cases the liquor was passed through a tiny wicket, like the ticket window at a railway station, the white seller standing back so that all that was visible of him was the hand that took the money and passed out the glass or bottle. It is easy to believe that the numerous failures of prosecutions on this point of identification were legitimate. At one time the police relied largely upon bringing home guilt by supplying the trap-boy with marked money, rushing the bar, and seizing the till the moment the purchase had been completed. This, however, was easily dealt with. No till was kept, except one for show, provided with a few innocent coins. When the money was taken from the Kaffir, it was immediately dropped into one of a dozen secret recesses placed conveniently out of sight, and, through a tube, the coins passed to a receptacle that was scarcely likely to be discovered in a hurried search by excited detectives groping in the ill-lighted corners of a maze-like building of boards and corrugated iron.

The ingenuity displayed by these Russian Jews in making their canteens proof against police raid and search suggested that they had learned the business under some such circumstances as those described by the writers of stories of Nihilists and kindred conspirators, whose liberty depends upon their skill in baffling the secret police.

The headquarters of one notorious "illicit" was a network of maze-like passages and blind alleys. Externally

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it was only a large, one-storied, angular building of corrugated iron, apparently having had wings and annexes added irregularly. It consisted of canteen, Kaffir eating-house, a miscellaneous store, and the private residence of the proprietor. It covered the space that might have been required for an eight- or ten-roomed bungalow. But the interior had been complicated so ingeniously, with a view to baffling the police, that it was easy for a stranger to spend half an hour in finding an egress when once he had passed into the inner recesses. Doors were arranged in the walls of the numerous eighteen-inch-wide passages, to close automatically after the by-passer had turned the next corner. On retracing his steps a minute afterwards, he would find his way barred by a door that certainly was not there a minute before. In various parts of the walls of rooms and passages a sheet of corrugated iron could be slid out of place by the initiated, and access given to another part of the building; while a pursuer, arriving a few seconds later, would be left marvelling whether his quarry passed away in spirit form.

The object of these entanglements was not so much the escape of the canteen keeper as the detention and befogging of detectives, white or black, while inconvenient evidence was being got rid of.

The concealment of liquor was sometimes advisable, but if the canteen keeper's licence was in order—and he always looked well to that—he had the right to keep as much of any alcoholic poison on the premises as he liked. The offence the police laid themselves out to prove was the selling of the stuff to Kaffirs. Keeping it was no crime.

Curiously enough the illicit liquor seller preferred to carry on his underground business in a building standing well out in the open veld. He did not care whether the police saw the natives entering and leaving the place.

As he sold food and other native necessities as well as liquor, his customers had every right to enter and loiter about the premises. What he had to keep a sharp eye for was a sudden swoop by the detectives, and a good open space was the best position for guarding against attack. Practically it was hopeless to bring a case home without the assistance of the trap-boys. No canteen keeper would serve a native with a strange white man looking on. The only chance the detectives had was to be sufficiently near to take the *corpus delicti* from the trap-boy before he could be suspected and followed by the ever alert "illicit." Every one of the gang had his own private spies, white and black. The latter were the most numerous and useful, since they were quick at detecting the presence of a police boy and brutal in visiting upon him the displeasure of their employers. So sharp did they become that it was useless for the police to employ strange boys as traps. Such would be spotted immediately by the "illicits" boys and "marked" for future identification, not only at that canteen, but at every other along the reef.

When possible, the police employed boys working on the mine served by the suspected canteen, but there was a strange and not altogether discreditable aversion on the part of boys to play the part of spy on their own mine. They did not object to trap a canteen out of their area, but even then they were as likely to sell the pass to the canteen keeper as to serve their police employers. They knew that their warning would be rewarded by permanent facilities for securing cheap "puza," while loyalty to the police would most probably end in broken head or limbs.

The average native is not a conspicuous success as a wily deceiver; he is too childlike and bland to emulate or cope with the Heathen Chinese in duplicity and cunning. Yet when associated with illicit liquor, either on

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his own account or as the agent of a canteen keeper, the Kaffir can, and does, manifest an amount of fox-like astuteness that comes as a surprise to many who believed they had sounded the hidden depths of Kaffir character. The sight of a native trap-boy giving away the police in the witness-box by purposely bungling his evidence is an amazing study in duplicity. The boy wears a look of angelic innocence and simplicity, and would make a speaking model for a picture of semi-civilised unsophistication. Yet his queer black mind is keenly alert to all the questions being put by the cross-examining counsel. He knows that he has to break down on the identification question without appearing to have swerved from the path of duty, and he collapses naturally, easily, artistically, and takes the kicks and cuffs he receives later from the disappointed and infuriated detective with meek submission and an air of "I deserve it for being a fool." He may well be content, for he is certain of half a sovereign from the canteen keeper he has saved, and free drinks for many a day. It was a rarely-departed-from custom of the "illicits" to pay well and promptly for any assistance rendered in extricating them from the meshes of the legal net. It was rarely that either white or black had any grievance against them on the score of unrequited obligation; consequently the very best service was always at their call.

It will be obvious on reflection that the task of proving the sale of liquor to a native, who had the right to enter the premises as a purchaser of food or raiment, was beset with enormous difficulties. Again and again ample testimony has been given in courts to prove that scores of Kaffirs were found lying about the premises drunk and incapable; that they have even been seen in the act of being ejected by the canteen keeper, too drunk to offer the slightest resistance.

The explanation was always the same, and unanswer-

able. "They were drunk when they came to my place; that is why I ejected them."

"But how do you explain the crowd of drunken natives lying outside?"

"They got drunk somewhere else, and came here to sleep it off."

In company with the local landdrost and the representative of a London journal, the writer one Sunday spent four hours—from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.—watching the Kaffirs enter a notorious West Rand illicit canteen. At noon we went up and counted seventy-eight natives lying about the veld within a few score yards of the canteen, all in a state of hopeless intoxication. It was a normal Sunday spectacle.

"Surely you have evidence enough here?" the journalist remarked to the landdrost.

"Not a vestige. Can you swear that these Kaffirs purchased the liquor here? or even that they were not drunk when they arrived, and purchased soda-water or ginger-beer to sober themselves?"

New-comers and investigators always had good cause for astonishment at the amazing rapidity with which the average native succumbed to the effects of a comparatively small quantity of liquor. Their wonder ceased when they learned the atrocious nature of the compound. An ordinary tot of liquor, for which sixpence was the normal charge and anything up to half a crown not unusual, consisted of, approximately, a quarter of a pint. Two such tots would make the Kaffir's eyes bulge and produce pronounced symptoms of intoxication. Three or four would render all but the hardest and most seasoned drunkards literally blind drunk. It was the commonest thing for a perfectly sober native to slip into a canteen while supposed to be holding a horse or performing some such temporary job. On the return of the employer, fifteen or twenty minutes later, he would find the boy,

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if not lying incapable, reeling and staggering preparatory to collapse.

The excuse of the liquor sellers was based on fact. The native will not pay for liquor or physic that does not show speedy effects, and entail pain and effort to swallow.

Blue-stone (sulphate of copper), alum, cayenne pepper, green chili, and sundry secret recipes of a caustic and corrosive character were the usual fortifiers employed to meet the demand of the Kaffirs for a drink that would bite. It was a poor sample that would not raise a blister on a saddle within an hour, or leave an indelible mark on an oak desk after five seconds contact.

Someone has said that no law can be successfully administered that has not the full approval of the majority. Whatever may be true of such laws in other countries, there is no doubt that the liquor law as applied to the serving of natives in the Transvaal not only had not the full approval of the majority, but infractions of it were regarded in much the same light as many people look at smuggling—as something not to be ashamed of, but even fit matter for boast if successfully carried out. The unpopularity of the class engaged in the illicit liquor business was more a matter of personality than of principle. At various times otherwise reputable members of the business community have been suspected of alliance with the trade, but the fact never prejudiced them with their fellows. As to the acknowledged chiefs of the illicit gang, the efforts of some of them to take position among their equals in wealth were marked by brazen effrontery and pachydermatous disregard of the sneers and criticisms of the public at large. Tact and finesse, those marked attributes of the Jewish race when engaged in difficult business enterprises, were apparently unknown quantities to the Peruvian illicit liquor merchant. He called attention to his unwholesome calling and invited suspicion in

the most glaring manner. No mine manager was ever testimonialised by his staff as a hint that they were tired of him, but the "illicits" appeared at the top of the list of subscribers. No Government official was permitted to get married, become a father, or provide any excuse for the complimentary attention of his friends, without the "illicit" figuring among the present-givers. Even materialistic Johannesburg expressed surprise when, on the marriage of a Rand public prosecutor who had many a time and oft cited a certain "illicit" to answer for his sins, the list of wedding presents duly published contained, after the name of this same much-prosecuted individual, the comment provocative line, "Suite of furniture." It was probably by way of living up to the Christian precept, "Do good to them that despitefully use you," that Isaac showered good upon this public prosecutor, and did not blush to find it fame. The arrival of the first-born to the public prosecutor was signalled by Isaac with a magnificent silver cradle, so plainly valuable and hall-marked that Isaac never once deemed it necessary to ask any admirer to "Guess vat it cost." In the course of three years Isaac's public benefactions to the public prosecutor made the drawing-room of that functionary's modest residence a Mecca for the Boer vrouws of the district, and the last addition was a portrait of Isaac himself, specially painted by a distinguished British artist while on a visit to Cape Town.

Many and extravagant are the stories told of the lavish expenditure of the illicit gang by way of palm oil and protection. What the exact figure was no one outside the ring can possibly know; but it required no special knowledge to be able to form an estimate as to the largeness of the amount. It needs no Sherlock Holmes to show by profound deductive reasoning that it is not by economy alone that a minor member of the liquor detective force contrives to keep race ponies, give swagger

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parties, wear diamonds, and send his children to expensive European schools on a salary equal to £3 per week in England; and at the same time be one of the most unfortunate men on the staff as a case-winner—which means small prospect of promotion.

A characteristic illustration of the barefaced methods of the gang, and at the same time a suggestive commentary upon the profits of the illicit liquor business, are supplied by an experience of the present writer. He had been conducting through the medium of his journal, the once well-known *Transvaal Sentinel*, a vigorous, but futile, attack on the illicit liquor gang on the West Rand, where the kings were absolute despotic monarchs, and did all they wished with very few limitations. So far they had not been successful in bending the licensing board to their will, thanks to the courage of one or two members. Several fruitless applications had been made to obtain a licence for a closed canteen on a derelict mine in the district; but even the easily satisfied West Rand licensing board could not be persuaded that a licence there could be needed by a single white man.

Just before the approaching licensing session a member of the gang called upon the editor of the *Sentinel*, and with businesslike promptitude came to the point without preface:

"Forty quid a month extra wouldn't hurt you, I know. I'll show you how you can make it easy. You know all the members of the Licensing Board, so you've only got to apply for a licence for the old canteen on the Princes' mine and you'll get it. I'll put in a manager and look after the business; all you'll have to do is to cash a cheque for forty golden sovereigns every month, and—and I'll tell you what: I don't care whether you go on writing d—— lies in your paper about me or not. Do what you like about that."

No man who has had a few years' intimate acquaint-

ance with Rand men and manners is often astonished at any business proposal; but this one, made with such unquestionable sincerity, literally staggered the journalist. When he had partially recovered, he replied as seriously as the offer warranted: "How on earth could I hold a canteen licence after all I have been saying and doing against the business?"

"Don't you see, that's where your chance comes in. You would tell the magistrates you wanted to show how a canteen ought to be run. You would write all about it in your paper, and the thing would go."

The Peruvian listened quietly but contemptuously while the editor expressed his feelings in a few remarks appropriate to the occasion, the gist of them being a suggestion that the visitor had made a mistake in his man.

"Ach, but you Englishers are no business men!" was the parting comment.

A personage who has always, perforce, figured prominently in every phase of discussion on the native and liquor question, is the compound manager. This important mine official is in charge of and responsible for the natives employed upon the mine. He must necessarily be not only a good native linguist, but something more. He must have a knowledge of Kaffir nature, and, more important still, a knowledge of how to humour and control it. There are few positions in which white men have control over blacks that call for higher qualities than that of manager of the native compound on a Rand mine.

As a body the compound managers are a good class who know their business, and are liked and respected by the natives. Here and there a bully and ignoramus holds sway for a period, but his chiefs have an infallible means of gauging his capacity. If they find a shortage of recruits at a time when other mines are getting all the labour they need, they know that the word has gone

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round among the kraals that the boss at this particular compound is a schelm, and the mine is to be avoided. It matters not whether the compound manager has earned his bad reputation justly or unjustly; he is anathema with the natives, and thanks to that marvellous and little understood system of rapid communication among them, within an amazingly short time the mine will be boycotted by the natives and suffer from that serious disease, chronic shortness of labour.

The discharge of the compound manager usually has a beneficial effect, unless, as sometimes happens, the successor is only another edition of the first.

Most compound managers are Natalians, for the reason that they are the only South African colonists who take the trouble to learn the native languages. It is the exception to meet a Natal-born man or woman who cannot hold converse with a Zulu. The Boers of Cape Colony and the Transvaal insisted on their native servants speaking the language of their masters. There are very few Boers who speak Zulu or any other native tongue.

The Natal-born compound manager on a Rand mine is a person of great weight and influence among the two to five or six thousand natives under his care. He is absolute overlord of the compound, a despotic chief whose word is more than law, for the law has its limitations, the compound manager has very few, and those he does not reveal to the Kaffirs.

It follows, therefore, that if liquor is to be passed into the compound, the manager must be either defied or reckoned with, for he has it within his power to make things particularly uncomfortable for persons suspected of incapacitating the necessary Kaffir. There has been more than one case in which the place and person of a canteen or storekeeper who has offended a compound manager have suffered considerable damage at the hands of an unidentified party of natives.

A new compound manager has to be approached by the "illicits" who do business with his natives, very cautiously. He may be a strong anti-liquor man, or a passive resister only; or he may be one of those who honestly believe that the native should be accorded facilities for getting drink within reason, which means at such times and in such quantities as do not render him valueless as a labour unit. But, whatever his views, the compound manager has to be reckoned with by the "illicits"; also by the police, for he can make or mar their work.

It is reasonably certain that the majority of compound managers on the Rand, whatever their ethical views on the subject of the demoralisation of the native, look at this drink question from the economic point of view. They know that the majority of their boys come to the mines because of the drink, and if that attraction ceased a short labour supply would be the natural consequence. The average manager is prepared to put up with the trouble of dealing with a percentage of drunken natives so long as he can send an average and sufficient number on shift, and an occasional fifteen or twenty sovereigns slipped into his hand unobtrusively by a gentleman interested in a canteen near the property atones for the annoyance of having to discipline two or three hundred drink-sodden brutes every Monday morning.

The pay of a compound manager is about £50 a month, with free quarters. Despite the many qualifications required, the supply of candidates for a vacancy is always excessive. Hence it is not surprising to learn that it is usual for a retiring compound manager to sell the next presentation for a sum ranging from three to twelve months' salary. The terms are, as a rule, a certain amount of cash down, the balance so much per month. There have been cases in which the new man has paid to his predecessor the whole of the salary re-

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ceived each month for a year, and contrived to make a profit out of what was left. Yet these thrifty souls were not Scotsmen !

The compound manager is compensated by the "illicit" for the worry occasioned by having to look after so many drunken natives. He realises that drunkenness would occur in any case; therefore, if Isaac or Jacob Druskovisky gives him a little present every month, he would be foolish to refuse it. The "illicits" are strong, and the best and most conscientious compound manager may now and then make some slip, which, if known to an unfriendly canteen keeper, might result in considerable unpleasantness and pecuniary loss to the compound manager. Therefore, being very human, and by no means solicitous for trouble, he finds it much better to keep his blind eye on the side of the compound where the liquor comes in, and the other eye on the main chance.

There is, however, one form of active service which the "illicit" expects from the recipients of his *bonsellas*: a sharp look out for poachers. No profitable business is without rivals, and there are always small men on the alert for a chance to snatch a slice of the business of the established monopolist. Like the poacher on game preserves, these gentry work at night, and out in the open. They employ one or two native runners, who visit the compounds and pass the word that liquor can be purchased at a certain spot in the adjacent veld at reasonable rates per bottle. The merchants, with their stock of a dozen or so bottles, sit at the receipt of custom in a depression in the ground or near a path leading to the compound, and thither purchasers are brought by the runners. One, two, or even half a dozen bottles, may be purchased, the native acting on behalf of a syndicate of Kaffirs in the compound who have the means and opportunity for a night's carouse, but no

chance of leaving the mine to patronise the usual canteen. As often as not the agent for the syndicate is one of the native mine police. The illicit liquor business is a source of rapid opulence to them. The writer once acted as a sort of executor to the estate of one of these native mine policemen, who had been engaged on the same property four years. His pay was £2 10s. a month; his savings at death amounted to £397 in cash. He had remitted to his parents in Natal over £100 for the purchase of cattle. The mine on which he was employed had only a small compound, and had not the reputation of being a "wet" one. One of the wealthiest natives in the Impendhla native district of Natal at the present time owns land and cattle valued at several thousand pounds. He went to Johannesburg in 1896, and for eight years was a mine police boy. The money he sent home was invested in cattle for him by an honest law agent. Average good fortune attended the business, and to-day Jim is a standing example to his race of what can be done on the Rand by a native with £2 10s. a month—and opportunities.

When one recalls these facts—the enormous wealth of the illicit liquor gang, the easy attitude of the mining authorities on the liquor question, and the enormous risk and difficulty of doing one's duty as compared with the prosperity and ease that results from shirking it—the marvel is that the police ever attempted to effect the conviction of a member of the gang. As a matter of fact, it was only under great pressure that they did. It was so much easier to catch a few amateur poachers. A conviction was a conviction, and the public were quite satisfied that the police were doing their utmost to stamp out the evil when they saw the official figures announcing that so many illicit liquor sellers had been caught and punished during the month. The fact that they were the smallest of small fry did not appear and did not matter.

One of the compensations of the strenuous life of the journalist is the privilege of knowing and associating with disreputable and consequently interesting characters without prejudice to himself. Among many such, from whom the writer has learned things worth knowing, was a once notorious "Peruvian" of the Rand, who had, by his unconventional irregularities, actually alienated the sympathy of his fellow countrymen—if any country claimed him. He had just been released from Krugersdorp gaol after serving a short term of well-deserved punishment, and in dire distress called upon the writer, and, "for auld acquaintance sake," alternately begged and demanded assistance. He unfolded a scheme by which he could benefit himself and assist the editor in his campaign against the illicit liquor gang, by showing how one phase of the game was played. The terms were a loan of twenty-five shillings, to be repaid with fifty per cent. interest, if necessary, within twelve hours, and confidential treatment, "strict honour and no names."

The terms were agreed to, bar the interest, which was generously foregone, and a rendezvous appointed for nine that night at a certain spot just off the beaten track leading to the Lancaster mine. In the interval Ikey was to expend the cash advanced in the following material: Four gallons of *pusa* (spirituous liquor), at the astounding forced sale price of 16s.; forty bottles at 1d. each (Ikey confessed later that he stole these); a small quantity of some corrosive powder known to the trade as "fortifier," 1s.; the balance to be spent in food and extras. Two or three drinking glasses were also necessary, and should have been purchased; but Ikey entered a local canteen, spent sixpence on beer, and left with four stout tumblers, which, he explained, would not be missed for a time, being too thick for white customers.

A few minutes after the appointed time the figure of Ikey, bearing a jingling sack on his back, appeared on

the sky line. He announced that, by judicious doctoring of the mixture, he had manufactured forty-six bottles of liquor, worth anything from five to twelve shillings apiece, that he had brought twenty-eight in the sack, and safely hidden the balance on the veranda of the editor's own office, feeling certain that no safer place could be conceived.

"If anyone should find them," said he, "all you have to do is to say they're samples you stole from the 'illicits' to show what wicked stuff they sell to the poor Kaffirs."

Ten minutes later the first customer arrived. He was a raw Shangaan, quite a lad. He had been informed by the police boy in the compound that he could purchase half a bottle of *puza* for a shilling, and produced the coin from his blanket. This was a bad start. The price of half a bottle was at least half-a-crown, and Ikey had no halves. Each bottle was full, or at least as full as regard for the interest of the seller would permit. Ikey and the Shangaan jabbered for five minutes in a strange jargon of Yiddish, Zulu and Dutch. Then a diplomatic compromise was effected. The Shangaan was given a liberal tot to drink on the spot and a full bottle. In return he left the shilling and his blanket as security, the latter to be redeemed on his returning with another Kaffir who would purchase two bottles for seven shillings.

Ikey had grave misgivings as to the wisdom of trusting to the honour of the boy, but argued that the sight of the liquor and the lowness of the price would tempt every Kaffir in the compound who had the price of a bottle.

"They'll form syndicates and pool their shillings," he said.

His faith was justified. Within half an hour the Shangaan, accompanied by another, arrived with seven

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shillings, took two bottles and the blanket, and left us at a run.

"Lay down!" said Ikey. "There's a white man coming."

We crouched in the short grass, and heard two miners, both intoxicated, on the way to the mine. They saw nothing of us, nor would it have mattered much if they had, but they scared off the game for nearly an hour. Then the boys began to find us, coming at intervals of five or ten minutes in ones or twos—usually in twos, one carrying the money subscribed by a syndicate in the compound, the other acting as escort and a check on his companion. The boys take no chances in an illicit liquor deal, except that of being bowled out by the police or the compound manager.

"But how do they smuggle these bottles into the compound without being detected?" was the natural query put to Ikey.

"You don't think a compound manager spends the night standing at the gate, do you?"

"No; but he has representatives—the police boys, for instance."

"The chances are that a police boy will be here presently to do a deal on behalf of a syndicate."

Ikey spoke as one having knowledge, and half an hour later his prognostication was justified. A police boy did come. He bought three bottles at a great reduction. It was policy to conciliate police boys. This one proved extremely useful. He remained on the spot to act as interpreter to any strange boys who might come to purchase while Ikey hurried into the *dorp* to collect the reserve store. The twenty-eight bottles had been disposed of in two and a half hours. Two hours sufficed to clear out the remaining dozen and a half, not including the time lost by a long dispute with a native who insisted that he had paid over a half-sovereign, which Ikey

declared was a sixpence. It is true the darkness favoured the possibility of Ikey being mistaken, though he took many strange oaths that he could not have made an error and paid the boy his proper change under protest, not because he did not feel that he had been cruelly wronged by an unscrupulous Kaffir whom he hoped the good Lord would forgive as he did.

That unfortunate incident made us a little uneasy about accepting the verbal statement of account he presented when the last bottle had been disposed of.

"The very worst night's business I've ever done in the veld, so help me!" he protested. "The competition is getting too sharp. Only twelve quid and done down for half a sovereign by a Kaffir—and a Shangaan, too—and here it's nearly two o'clock in the morning and I haven't got a bed to sleep in unless I knock up a hotel and pay eight bob for bed and breakfast. No, boss, you take it from me, this business ain't what it used to be. Here's your twenty-five bob. Much obliged. Good-night."

If in bad times twenty-five shillings could be made to produce twelve pounds in four hours, one is tempted to wonder what was the average rate of profit in the good times.

CHAPTER IV

THE KAFFIR AS SPY AND DETECTIVE

Spying Uncongenial to Kaffir Nature—Natives Impartial Witnesses—
Their Marvellous Powers of Detailed Observation—Cunning a Rare
Native Attribute: Until Educated—Tom Malief Runs the Blockade
at Ladysmith—Witch Doctors as Intelligence Agents—John Shep-
stone's Use of Them—The Sandwich System a Guarantee against
Native Risings—Rival Chiefs and a White Wizard—Finger-prints as
Witchcraft—A Record Case of Kaffir Initiative—Natives Tyrants as
Policemen—Africanus of Krugersdorp—Fat Jim, the Thimble-Rigger
Detective

COMMENT has been made in previous chapters upon the remarkable faculty for minute and accurate observation possessed by most South African natives. As aids and subordinates to the police they are largely and successfully employed, and if the truth always came out, many a policeman who has gained credit for a particularly smart piece of work would have to share it very liberally with his humble Kaffir assistant.

At the same time, it is fair to the native to explain that the astuteness he often displays as a detective is not the outcome of any special liking for the part of spy. As a matter of fact, it is difficult as a rule to induce a native to act as informer against members of his own tribe; this, as we have seen, is particularly true in the case of the trap-boys employed by the police to detect illicit liquor offences in the Rand mines. This highly commendable indisposition on the part of natives to inform against their own people has manifested itself in every Kaffir war. It has been the rarest thing for a member of an insurrectionary tribe to act as spy on behalf of the whites. Now and then cases have occurred of

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native servants giving their masters warning of impending trouble, but their assistance has stopped at that. In more than one instance, a native, after giving warning, has deserted and joined his tribesmen, and taken an active part in the hostilities that followed. There were many such occurrences at the time of the Matabele rising, also before the Zulu war of 1879.

It is significant that no one has come forward with a similar story of the Bambaata rebellion in 1905, which considerably supports those who assert that the rising was not premeditated. It is also to the credit of the native that cases are few in which a native employee who has joined a fighting raid on the whites has made a point of turning against his master when opportunity occurred.

Despite the suggestions of novelists and a few rabid haters of a black skin, it is not an established fact that the South African native is either treacherous or revengeful. Emphatic examples of this primitive weakness may be sought in vain. Anyone who has had experience of the native as a witness in a court of justice must, if honest, testify to the surprising impartiality and absence of personal animus that characterises the testimony of most Kaffirs. A native giving evidence as complainant in a case of brutal assault upon himself will often—in fact, usually—tell his story with as little feeling as if testifying to the state of the weather or the number of oxen he counted under certain conditions. This personal detachment, while it checks zeal, makes for greater accuracy and reliability. At the same time, while personally indifferent as to whether he proves a case or not, the average Kaffir is too much disposed to give to a question the answer which he believes the questioner desires, unless it involves “giving away” one of his own people; then he can be loyalty personified.

The only occasion when a Kaffir may be relied upon

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to play the part of investigator with anything like enthusiasm is when engaged in thwarting the schemes of a rival tribe. Then he works zealously, even enthusiastically. During the Zulu war the best scouts on the English side were Basutos and Swazis, who have a traditional feud against the Children of the Sun. In the compounds a Swazi will act as trap-boy to get a conviction against a canteen keeper whose customers are mainly Zulus, but it is difficult to enlist his services if the canteen is patronised equally by his own people.

The value of the native as a spy and detective consists not so much in his cunning and address as in his wondrous eye for detail and his ability for remembering for long all that he saw and heard. Months afterwards a native will describe with absolute accuracy the dress, appearance and mannerisms of a white man who may have stopped at the kraal only long enough to ask his way, and it would be risky to bet that he would not pick out the horse among a hundred of similar size and colour.

Here is a striking, but by no means exceptional, illustration of the Kaffir's faculty for observing detail.

During the last Boer war a number of natives were employed as scouts to watch the passes in Natal on the Basuto border. The present writer, riding to an outpost in the district, came a cropper in a deep and stony drift, and not only was drenched through, but his pony was lamed. At an adjacent farmhouse he was hospitably received, and as his mission would not brook delay the host placed at his disposal an outfit and his own pony. It happened that, physically, the two men were conveniently pairs, and with his host's clothes, and notably an extra wide and white smasher hat, and pony, the guest could easily be mistaken for the owner at a distance. On the resumed journey, in his fresh equipment, the rider noticed at a distance of five or six miles a

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party of these native scouts hunting a small buck. On his return, he mentioned the incident to his host. Late that evening, the scout leader, a magnificent specimen of the Basuto, came to the farm. The host asked for further details of the hunting incident, pretending he had seen it, adding, "I could not stay to see who got the buck."

The Basuto smiled.

"You did not see at all, baas. I thought it was you at first—same pony, same clothes, but not same man."

"How do you know?"

"When you jump sluit you don't put your hand on your back like that baas did."

The remarkable thing is that the Basuto had not seen the farmer ride more than half a dozen times. The writer was then suffering from the effects of a Boer bullet in the region of the kidneys, and had developed a habit of easing the pain by pressing the hand on the spot when riding.

This trifle was detected at five miles' range.

The Kaffir's memory is a corroboration of the theory that the civilised custom of making written memoranda tends to weaken the recollection by disuse. Knowing no method of assisting it, the native has to rely upon his unaided memory, which, by constant exercise, becomes strong and healthy.

Of the cunning one is used to associate with savages, actual and semi, the Kaffir has little. Compared with the Indian of Natal he is an infant. There are few stories that show him as a creature of intellectual acumen. When caught in any compromising position he is as awkward and bungling as a nervous youth suddenly called upon to make a speech. The finesse, acting and self-control in emergency that enable an Indian to brazen out the most glaring evidence of guilt are entirely absent

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in the Kaffir. When faced in the witness box with an obvious contradiction or absolute lie, he will stand silent or grin in apparent enjoyment and appreciation of the clean bowl. An Indian would meet the situation with a prompt restatement of the lie, and impress a stranger by his earnestness. Contact with civilisation, however, too often sharpens the wits of the Kaffir for use on the wrong side.

It is difficult to imagine a Kaffir spy prowling around in a hostile camp, fencing awkward questions and bounding De Wet-like out of tight corners. He has no initiative, no resource. He does what he is told by his white boss, and if no untoward circumstances not reckoned on and prepared for in the programme intervene, he will acquit himself admirably as an obedient servant, but the odds are all on his going under at the first difficulty. This want of originality prevented the early diamond miners at Kimberley from being bankrupted by the defalcations of their Kaffir employees. It was easy enough for a Kaffir to find a stone and conceal it temporarily. Where his impotence showed itself was in the process of handling it on the way to the buyer. The same wooden way, the same awkwardly ostentatious parade of the possession of a secret, put the most casual onlooker on the alert, and discovery was almost certain. The silly creature was simply doing as he had been told by some *confrère* who had been lucky enough to get through without detection. He had no conception of varying the business to meet the circumstances. Like the Chinese, he is a copyist pure and simple, minus the Chinaman's brain and nous.

It is perhaps an unwise, certainly a disconcerting admission to have to make, but it is a well-recognised fact that the Kaffir is a ludicrous failure at fraud, duplicity, and that low smartness which the Boers describe by the adjective "slim," until he has become civilised and partially educated by whites. Then his development is rapid.

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Tom Malief, an "educated" Natal Kaffir, got through the Boer lines, carrying dispatches and private letters between Ladysmith and Maritzburg, mixed with the Boers in their camps, heard their gossip, and repeated the task successfully until the relief. A dozen raw natives paid the penalty of their simplicity by being made more raw at the wagon wheel. They knew the country better than Tom Malief, and could crawl through dongas and long grass to the very edge of a Boer camp; but when it came to standing erect and walking boldly among the burghers they failed. The first questions: "Who are you? Where come ye?" were the shibboleth over which they stumbled.

Many a time the best spy the white man fighting Kaffirs has had has been the unconscious informer—a straggler, or a sympathiser with the enemy who has stumbled upon a white patrol. A few questions in his own tongue put to him by a colonial who knows how to handle the native, will throw him off his guard, and he tells all that is wanted as simply as an inexperienced witness in the hands of an expert cross-examining counsel.

The very best spies and general intelligence agents that can be employed are the native witch doctors—when they are obtainable. The success of their predictions is entirely dependent upon their capacity for unsuspectingly extracting information. The witch doctor is an epitome of all that is to be known of the affairs of his clients. He has a knack of commanding information from high and low in the kraal, and is a genius at remembering and utilising at the proper time all that he has absorbed. To a very great extent, he plays the part of father confessor. Before undertaking either a cure or a prophecy he, by deft questions and more adroit hints and suggestions, drags from his victim an amount of useful information sufficient to provide material for a history of the life of the subject. He makes his victim unconsciously act up to the European

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maxim: "Keep nothing from your doctor and lawyer." As the wizard acts in both capacities, he is naturally the recipient of a vast stock of information which he contrives to utilise sooner or later. In addition to these immense advantages, he has the privilege of access to every kraal, even the huts of the chiefs' wives. The gossip of a dozen royal favourites alone would make any average Kaffir an encyclopædia of knowledge. What must it be worth to one whose business it is to live up to the truism, "Knowledge is power"?

No white men placed in authority over the natives of South Africa have had the weight and success of those two born native administrators, the late Sir Theophilus Shepstone, of Natal, and his brother John, Natal's first and oldest magistrate. Of the two it would be difficult to specify the abler, but John more than his brother recognised the immense value and importance of the witch doctor as a *via media* between white and black. It was mainly on his representations that the Government of Natal consented to recognise the witch doctor in a limited way, instead of acting upon the counsel of those ultra civilisers who would wipe him off the face of the land, and make his name and profession anathema.

The calmer judgment of the after years has confirmed the wisdom of John Shepstone in making of the witch doctor a friend instead of an enemy. Again and again in the troublous times when native unrest and risings were ever present diseases in the Colony of Natal, John Shepstone was able to place his Government in a state of preparedness which unquestionably averted a general eating up of the handful of whites who, up till practically the other day, constituted the European population of the colony. It was always a puzzle to the townsfolk how John Shepstone contrived to be ahead of all native movements, but unfortunately his success was not regarded with universal and wholehearted approval. There was a small

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but influential party in the Government who looked on Shepstone's native policy with mistrust and antagonism. They were not in sympathy with any action which was based on the conciliation of the native. Their view of him was Artemus Ward's opinion of the American Aborigine—"Indians is pizen." They could not understand or appreciate the wisdom of giving a *locus standi* to the representative of a phase of barbarism, as they honestly regarded a witch doctor. They did not know, nor was it the policy of John Shepstone to explain, that by maintaining the witch doctor as a quasi regular practitioner among the natives, he was instituting the most perfect private intelligence department possessed by any Government. Nor was that all. He was placing under an obligation to himself and the Government the most influential body in Kaffirland. The Government might issue decrees through the residential magistrates, who read and interpreted them according to official instructions at a formal conclave of chiefs and indunas at the magistracy, but the real and most effective interpretation was that given in the kraals by the witch doctor as he travelled round practising his profession, and that interpretation was inspired by John Shepstone, who knew how to adjust the stiff and formal official language to the capacity of the native mind.

Unfortunately, the policy of John Shepstone towards the witch doctor has not been maintained, not because it was disapproved, but because it needed the personality of a Shepstone behind it. Many resident native magistrates still make a point of keeping in friendly touch with the doctor, but there is not that confidential relationship that made John Shepstone so strong. It is a question whether the whole of the magistrates of Natal get as much information in a year as Shepstone obtained in a month.

The principal source of inside information is the petty

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chiefs who inform against one another in a spirit of tribal antagonism. The Natal Government, when free from the influence of faddists, is particularly sane in the matter of handling natives. It may be severe and unchristian, according to European notions, but there is this point in favour of the assumption that Natalians know something of the South African native. They have had occasion to study him from the day the colony was founded till now, and they are ever in his midst—a spoonful of milk in a bottle of ink. Perhaps there may be something in the English idea that those on the spot are prejudiced, and the best qualification for governing a native race successfully is absolute ignorance of it. But in the absence of home advisers sufficiently uninformed, the Natalians have contrived to manage the native fairly well.

Among the most successful of their strokes of policy is that of decentralisation by sandwiching discordant units. The various tribes are scattered over the Colony in large districts assigned for their exclusive occupation and use, and no two friendly tribes are put together. It may mean a little more friction and an occasional tribal fight; but therein lies the safety of the white. So long as the natives are at loggerheads with one another, there will be no universal Kaffir rising. Put them all together in peace and harmony, and they will seek relief from the monotony of brotherly love by fighting the common enemy—the white.

One immense advantage of this sandwiching system is that each tribe keeps a jealous eye upon its rival neighbour. At the first sign of discontent and "unrest"—to use the official euphemism—the petty chiefs on either side of the malcontent location tumble over each other in their haste to inform the resident magistrate. It may not be a system conducive to the development of the nobler traits of human character, but it is highly advantageous to the

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white, and averts much shooting, hanging and flogging of rebels.

Here is a story illustrative of the application of this system of tribal rivalry.

An English visitor was staying at a farmhouse in Natal, situate about midway between two rival and unfriendly native locations. The Englishman, like most educated new-comers, became much interested in the natives, and collected and made notes of all he could learn of native folk-lore, manners and customs, visiting the kraals and getting as much in touch with the Kaffir in his native wild as possible. It happened, unfortunately, that he was an expert amateur conjurer, and, by way of amusing and mystifying the natives, performed many startling tricks of sleight of hand. He also introduced the gramophone and galvanic battery to the district, and was soon regarded with that awe and suspicion as something uncanny which the native manifests towards the mysteries of white ingenuity.

Among the tricks he played was this: He constructed a small fire balloon, painted a demoniacal face on the bottom side, and in the darkness of evening floated it over the kraals, moored kite-like by a string. He had not unreasonably anticipated an outburst of frantic terror, and was a little disappointed that no sound or sign showed the success of the joke. It was his host who got a shock. Next morning, soon after daybreak, a number of natives renting land on the farm came up and gave notice to quit. The place, they said, was amtagata (bewitched). They had all seen the previous night the spook that brings death, rinderpest and other native annoyances.

The other aspect of the business was told later by the resident magistrate.

The day after the balloon episode three petty and rival chiefs of the district rode to the magistracy to lay an information against one or the other of his rivals for having

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entered into a compact with the white stranger to bewitch his kraal. Each gave as his reasons the fact that this white wizard had frequently been in the kraal of the other chief. The magistrate being of the type who understand the native did not preach a sermon on the folly of ignorance and call the chiefs superstitious heathen. He improved the occasion by expatiating on the marvellous knowledge and power of the white man, thanked them for having been so loyal as to report the wickedness of the others, and confidentially assured each scared chief that the white wizard's spell would not work, as he in his ignorance of the country had produced a charm for injuring the mealie crop, not knowing that the old had been reaped and the new not planted; further, that this particular form of witchcraft was only operative against English crops, of which the natives had none.

This tactful magistrate, owing to the incident not having been reported, escaped the indignant censure of the several correspondents who wrote to the papers denouncing the Maritzburg magistrate for "perpetuating and encouraging heathenism" in the case reported in the *Natal Mercury* :—

"Our City correspondent writes :—At the Police Court, on Friday, the Assistant Magistrate, Mr. Von Gerard, in dealing with a native found guilty of housebreaking, expatiated upon the wonderful completeness of the fingerprint system as applied to native thieves, and this native in particular. 'Tell him, Mr. Interpreter,' said the magistrate, with a twinkle, 'that the Government employs a whole staff of "abatagati," who know what you thieves are doing.' He went on to describe how the finger prints on the window and knife cried out to the abatagati who went down to see them that the accused had been in the pantry. The marks had said: 'My name is Kutulu' (the native's name). Accused had been betrayed by the

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soot, but, even had there been no soot, he would still have been betrayed, and the glass where his fingers had pressed would have cried aloud to the abatagati. The magistrate concluded: 'When you come out of gaol, and go home to your kraal, you must tell all your friends what happened. Tell them that the Government has lots of abatagati, who keep thousands of little spirits in boxes who find out what all the thieves have been doing. If you had stolen anything in this case, you would have had lashes, but as it is you will go to gaol for three months.' With a very heart-felt 'Koos,' the native went away in custody."

These shortsighted censors and critics of conditions they do not understand, do not realise that the mind of the Kaffir is in an infantile stage, and must be for many generations yet to come. They belong to the same school of thought as the parent who wrote to the schoolmaster objecting to his little daughter being encouraged to read fairy stories, because "all intelligent people know that fairies have no existence."

But they have—for children and Kaffirs. That story of the Maritzburg magistrate is interesting and instructive from several points of view. It gives a hint of the simplicity that still exists among the natives even after long association with the whites—for Kutulu was clearly a town "boy"—and it indicates the attitude of the average native towards the agents of the law. It is a fact, and perhaps it is well that it should be so, that the Kaffir has a flatteringly exalted estimate of the omniscience of the white policeman. Captain Heuck, an Englishman who was in 1894 Chief of Police at Johannesburg and later a successful hunter down of the illicit liquor seller, always made a point of impressing upon his subordinates the wisdom of maintaining an assumption of infallibility before their native assistants. "They believe you know everything;

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live up to your character. Never let a Kaffir believe that the information he brings is either new or important. Let him go away with the impression that you already knew what he has told you, and that his contribution is merely useful but not essential corroboration."

This advice argues a much deeper knowledge of native character than is possessed by most police officers, but Heuck was a Brighton schoolboy. Whenever possible, some police officers, who act up to Captain Heuck's maxims, send a second native to check, unseen, the other, and always heard his report first. When the original made his statement and found his chief able to correct or amplify some of the details two useful effects were produced: one, profound respect for the wonderful white man who could see without being seen, and a stimulant to rigorous performance of duties.

"Baas knows already. Why does he send me?" was a remark often addressed by native detectives to Inspector Hunt, of the Natal Criminal Investigation Department, who met with a tragic death at the hands of natives, the avenging of which led to the last Zulu rising headed by Bambaata. It has been suggested, and there is an element of extreme probability in it, that Hunt was killed, not because he was attempting to collect an unpopular tax, but because his reputation among the natives as the man who could see through everything, carried with it a suspicion of witchcraft. It is as unfortunate for a white man in South Africa to have the taint of wizardry as it was in England two or three hundred years ago. The native detective is naturally used principally for the collection of evidence regarding his own folk. It is rarely that he can be utilised in "white cases" beyond such elementary services as keeping observation upon the outdoor movements of a person. As a Kaffir is not likely to gain entrance to any building that a shadowed subject may enter, and cannot be out of doors after 9 p.m., his field of usefulness is of

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necessity limited. There have, however, been a few cases in which the powers of close observation of a native have proved of great use in keeping an eye upon a white suspect, and at the same time he has revealed a degree of intelligent deduction that was all the more remarkable for the reason that a white man's ways and line of thought are not his. A certain action by a fellow native could be interpreted and supply a clue to what was likely to follow, but this would not be so when the subject was a European.

In the record case, the object was to keep watch upon a white woman suspected of the authorship of a number of anonymous letters of a peculiarly atrocious character that were being received by prominent public persons in Natal, reflecting gravely upon the character of a popular and esteemed public servant. Circumstantial evidence pointed strongly to Mrs. X, but for long she had successfully eluded the most elaborate traps. It was very important to get a specimen of her handwriting, but, strange to say, not a scrap was apparently in existence. Perhaps the most damning point against her was that within a few days of the detectives being put on her track she appeared in public with her right hand in a bandage, the explanation being that she had burnt her fingers badly with curling tongs. A native, not in the police force, but known to Inspector Hunt, was sent to the boarding-house where the lady resided, nominally to seek work as kitchen or house boy. Failing that, he was to make an excuse for associating with the Kaffir servants. His instructions were to find out if and where the missis wrote and posted letters during the day, and if possible to get hold of one by any means. On the face of it, no more forlorn hope was ever entered upon than to set an ignorant Kaffir, speaking only a few words of English, to keep watch upon the correspondence of a lady whom he could not approach within yards in the open, and certainly could never get near in the house.

For more than a week the boy hovered on or about the premises, having struck up a useful friendship with the Kaffir servants; but every night at the ringing of the curfew, which sends all town natives indoors, he passed the detective office and whispered "Ikona"—that most comprehensive negative in any language—to the native constable at the door.

On the ninth day, just before curfew on Sunday evening, the boy entered the detective office in a state of excitement, and placed upon the inspector's desk a piece of paper. It was the usual pass given by employers to their native servants, authorising the police to permit the bearer to be out of doors after 9 p.m. till a specified hour. It was in a female handwriting, and was signed with the name of the keeper of the boarding-house where the suspected libeller resided.

The boy had obtained a good and much-wanted specimen of the calligraphy which supplied the clue required, and in the end resulted in bringing home to the suspect the authorship of the anonymous letters. A confession was obtained under promise of no criminal proceedings, and the libels ceased. The ingenuity displayed by the native was so unusual that one would be disposed to believe that he had been inspired by his chief; but that officer, a man of honour, declared that the idea never occurred to him. The admission of such an oversight is the best evidence of its genuineness, for Government officials do not readily confess to sins of omission and commission. The boy told how he arrived at the conclusion that the bandage on the hand was a pretence. The explanation argues acute observation of the ways of white women.

"The missis used right hand same as if not sore. She put long pin into her hat with it. If fingers are sore and tied up tight you can hold only big things, not little thin things like pins."

Having decided that the missis could write if she chose,

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and finding that her correspondence was tardy, the boy hit upon an ingenious expedient for hastening matters, the success of which depended upon catching the lady alone in the house. This occurred on the Sunday evening, when the rest of the house party were at church. The boy sent one of the servants in to the lady with a request: Would the missis give him a pass to be out till ten o'clock. He had just learned that his brother was lying sick at a distance, and he must go to him lest he was robbed by the other Kaffirs of the money he had saved.

Completely taken off her guard the lady wrote the required document, signing on behalf of the boy's mistress. It proved all sufficient. This incipient Sherlock Holmes was, on the strength of this display of super-intellect, taken on to the force, and given a chance to distinguish himself again. His undoubted intellect was promptly prostituted to personal profit. Within a month he had been convicted of blackmailing natives, by threatening to arrest them for uncommitted offences unless paid a bribe measured by the capacity of the victim. Six months' imprisonment and fifteen lashes spoiled a promising native detective. It is a depressing because too well attested fact that super-intellect in a Kaffir most often finds its best manifestation in crime. It is a Colonial proverb that the mission school is the infant school of the jail. Fortunately this is not altogether true, but near enough to excuse the flippancy. In too many cases the first practical use to which a native puts the art of writing is forgery. There is always a market for an illicit pass. The pass is to the Kaffir what the passport and identification papers are to the official-ridden Russian. He cannot move outside his kraal without one. To the town Kaffir the pass is a thing of ever present concern. If sent by his employer outside the house after 9 p.m. he must be provided with a permit—always a hasty note scribbled on the handiest piece of

blank paper. Few tradesmen will deliver goods to a native for his master without a written authority, and it is a serious offence for anyone to supply intoxicating liquor to a native without a signed order. The rawest Kaffir is not in town a week before he realises the magic potency of the all-pervading pass; by the end of the second week he knows where and how to obtain for a monetary consideration, ranging from a tickie (a threepenny bit) to five shillings, a colourable imitation that will give him freedom, after the Hamba Kyah bell has sounded, to roam the streets or purchase that key to paradise—a bottle of whisky. There are two lowest depths of degradation to which a white man can sink in the South African Colonies. One is to consort with a native woman; the other—lower still in public estimation—to write liquor passes for natives for money or—depravity of depravities—a share of the bottle. There are white occupants of those deeps, but fortunately very few.

The proverbial tyranny of man dressed in a little brief authority is painfully exemplified too often in the case of the native policeman. If unwatched, or under a lax white superior, he is uniformly brutal to his fellow man. No native constable is permitted to arrest or in any direct way deal with a white man, and if for no other reason than the necessity of maintaining the doctrine of white divinity, even in criminals, the reservation is justified. The native policeman takes it for granted that a prisoner's punishment should begin the moment the arresting hand of the law is laid upon him. Also that he is going to escape at the first opportunity. Oddly enough, attempts to escape from custody are extremely rare among natives. They yield to the inevitable with fatalistic passivity; but this recognised fact does not mitigate the austere watchfulness of the native custodian. He treats his prisoner as the brutal driver does his horse—flicks him with the whip to go faster, to go slower; when he pulls up, when he starts;

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when he is doing something, flicks him for doing it; when he is doing nothing, flicks him for not doing something. Only instead of a whip the Kaffir constable employs a police staff or cudgel, and uses it on the hip bone and shins. Some of them also practise a sort of jiu-jitsu grip on the arm, which looks like a caress, but produces the effect of an excruciating dislocation. It is but fair to say that these irregularities are rarely countenanced by the white constables, who, as a rule, keep their assistants well in hand. But even a Colonial policeman can wink occasionally, and natives can be very troublesome.

Bad as the physical excesses of the native policeman may be, they are harmless compared with the extortions often practised by him upon his victims. The town native, like the average London street boy, has not a profound fear of or respect for the blue-coated representative of the law, unless he be white, but the young man from the country has not had opportunity for realising that the putting on of a uniform does not make a Kaffir a god. It takes some time for him to address a Kaffir constable as an equal. Therefore, on the principle that dogs and horses know those who are afraid of them and take liberties accordingly, the native constable regards as legitimate prey the raw Kaffir fresh to town life. It is not too much to say that many a youth has had his life in town made a veritable hell by the extortions and tyrannies of some Kaffir policeman who has exploited him. The path of the town native is beset with so many gins and pitfalls that it is the easiest thing possible to entrap an innocent into some breach of the wide-spread law, and hold it *in terrorem* over him until the exhaustion of the silver mine or the developed knowledge of the victim have driven off the pirate. It is not uncommon for a raw Kaffir to hand over the bulk of his monthly wages for a year to some scoundrelly native constable who has obtained a hold over him by threats of exposure for some non-existent crime. As it is not to the

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interest of the victim to denounce his spoiler when the truth is revealed, it is not often that punishment falls upon the blackmailer. The chances of any town native, however experienced, giving a legitimate excuse for action on the part of a native constable are too great to render it policy to make enemies of the force—for the freemasonry among the native police is pronounced, and "the enemy of one, the enemy of all is."

One particularly atrocious scoundrel was brought to book in Johannesburg some years ago. His method of exploitation was to go to the friends of a native sentenced to a flogging and represent that for a certain sum the prison doctor would certify that the prisoner was medically unfit to receive lashes. How long he had been carrying on the business can only be guessed, but payments of sums totalling £320 were proved, covering a period of about two years. The facts came out by an odd accident. The present writer was occupying an office in Johannesburg, near the then residence of the jail surgeon. An Indian coolie woman entered one morning and astonished even a surprise-proof Rand journalist by inquiring in very good English, "Is this where you pay for the floggings?" Her husband had been sentenced by the magistrate to six months and ten lashes, and the poor creature had collected somehow twenty-three shillings, all in silver. This, she had been told, would save her husband's back, but she was terribly afraid that, owing to the two days that she had been occupied in raising the money, the lashes had been administered. Inquiry proved that her fear was justified.

Scenting a scandal we set about investigating, with the result that the facts as indicated came to light. A native constable, whose duty was to act as escort to prisoners to and from the Court House to the jail, made it his business to get into communication with the friends of a candidate for the triangle and bleed them. In due

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course he had to pay the penalty. Twelve months' imprisonment and twenty-five lashes were his portion. The doctor certified him as fit to receive every lash, and he had them.

Compared with the native police of Natal, the trap-boys and jail Kaffirs employed in the Transvaal are much inferior, and infinitely more amenable to corruption. The explanation of the latter weakness is doubtless example. It would be idle to deny or attempt to palliate the too well established fact that bribery was as much part of the police system under the old regime as the uniform. No one regarded it as a wrong to tip a policeman, either to assist in obtaining a conviction or in averting it. The then Chief Justice, Mr. Kotze, an able and honourable man, did not hesitate to lay it down from the Bench that it was no moral offence to give a present to a policeman. He used a memorable illustration. "Suppose I am going out with all my family for the evening, and, as sometimes happens, the native servants take advantage of my absence to leave the house, am I not justified in tipping the constable on the beat to keep an extra sharp eye on my place?"

That authoritative defence of "tipping" was very largely and freely interpreted by the force.

An amusing, original, and let us hope untypical, Kaffir official was one Africanus, for a long time native interpreter and constable at the Court of the Landdrost of Krugersdorp. He claimed to be acquainted with every native language, but there is good reason to believe that his linguistic attainments were limited to Basuto, Zulu and the Taal. Africanus generally proffered his services to prisoners as friend at Court, and, if refused, woe to the accused. In interpreting the evidence for the defence he did not hesitate to colour it to the prejudice of the prisoner. Very few Transvaalers understand Zulu, so the chances of Africanus being detected in his wilful misrepre-

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sentation of what was said was remote. He naturally was not in a position to assist or in any way benefit a prisoner, but he could damage his defence, and doubtless often did.

Among his multifarious duties was the ringing of the nine o'clock bell which sends all but special pass-armed natives indoors. It was the symbol and sword of Africanus's domination over the Kaffirs. If he had been affronted by disrespectful natives during the day he would mete out punishment to the whole of local Kaffirdom by ringing them in a quarter of an hour too soon. If he had been annoyed very much he would dock the day of half an hour. Once, having a private assignation on his own account, he startled the Dorp by putting the clock on nearly an hour. He was strongly opposed to protracted sittings of the Magistrates' Court. When the list of prisoners was inconveniently long and portended an all-day séance he would use his persuasive powers on those who meditated putting in a defence and encourage them to plead guilty.

"You are sure to be convicted," he would say, "and if you make the magistrate angry by keeping him away from his dinner he will give you lashes. Say you are guilty and get off with a month in tronk. It's not bad in our tronk. No hard work, plenty of skoff (food) and"—this was the great inducement—"I will look after you."

It is said that very few failed to consent to judgment, and most of them got the lashes that Africanus had promised should not be included in the programme. In those days jail accommodation was as scarce as Kaffir labour, so, for economic reasons, it was cheaper to flog than imprison. The Government saved rations, the employer got his servant back in a day or two.

Africanus is the hero of a classic story.

Owing to his long service, his magnificent assurance,

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and the complacency of the Landdrost, whose pet he was, the interpreter was permitted a latitude that was unusual even in a country of unconventionality. He was *de facto* master of the ceremonies at Court on the coloured side. He even arranged the order in which "my cases"—that is, native cases—should come on, the Public Prosecutor being as leniently submissive as the chief magistrate, so long as he was not unduly worried by details. Africanus took care that no other official of the Court should have cause to complain of being troubled by the business of the "department of Africanus."

There was a case in which three Kaffirs were up for an assault upon three others. Owing to an extra rush of business that morning, Africanus got things a trifle mixed, which was pardonable seeing that prisoners, prosecutors and witnesses for both sides were all herded together at the back of the Court-house yard. When this case was called Africanus put the three witnesses into the dock and held the accused in reserve as witnesses against them, while the Public Prosecutor opened the case.

It was not long before Africanus discovered his error, but he dared not apply for leave to amend his pleadings, for it happened that quite recently he had perpetrated some less heinous offence, and had been threatened with lashes "next time." There was, therefore, no help for it but to go on. As no one in Court knew a word of Zulu, the protests of the bogus prisoners fell on deaf ears, except that they irritated the Landdrost. Africanus to his credit made the case as easy as possible, concocting the evidence that he put in the mouths of the strangely transformed witnesses. In the end the three innocents were found guilty of assault under provocation, and were awarded a short term of imprisonment for that and fifteen lashes, nominally as part of the assault wages, but actually for making such an unseemly fuss in the dock. The original

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prisoners were, of course, released, but were so astounded at the turn affairs had taken that they stood stock still, and had to be chased off the premises. There was a rumour that Africanus had to pay them ten shillings a month each as hush money so long as they remained on the mine at which they were employed; but we who knew Africanus had our doubts. He was not the sort of person to be blackmailed. It is more probable that he would have ordered them to quit the district under pain of re-arrest on a charge of perjury.

The story of Mafuta, or Fat Jim, the Johannesburg police trap-boy, may be worth placing on record among the cases of super-intelligent Kaffirs.

Jim's speciality was the trapping of the professors of the pea-and-walnut game, which is the Colonial version of the familiar thimble-and-pea trick of the gentry known as thimblerriggers, who beguile journeys to race courses in England. Instead of three thimbles and an ordinary real pea, the apparatus consists of three half walnut shells, while the pea is a tiny hollow white rubber ball which is held flat between the fingers while the sportsmen are seeking it beneath its nutshell cover, where by the rules of the game it ought to be. The game has a peculiar fascination for the Zulu mine boy, and the white professors, who, as in England, are generally "connected with the Turf," contrive to make a handsome living out of it. They work with Kaffir confederates, who are permitted to win and make splendid decoys.

The game was at length so devastating in its effects that the Kaffirs had no money to spend with the illicit liquor dealers. So a strong protest and moral representation was made to the authorities, and a police campaign begun for the suppression of the pea and walnut gang.

Fat Jim had learned the game in the expensive school of experience, and had complained to the police.

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They recognised in him a possibly effective trap, and Jim was given a commission to play simpleton at £2 a month and expenses.

It was an idyllic life for a Kaffir of Jim's work-shirking propensities—nothing to do but to loaf round, free to go anywhere on the strength of the special permit he carried tied in the band of his breeches, and gamble with Government money. Jim proved a great success. His big brown eyes and moon face, illumined by an idiotic smile, disarmed the suspicion of the "widest" walnut merchant, and Jim lost at the will of the rigger with emotionless gratification. He also proved an excellent witness in the box, and was the means of getting "some of his own back" from more than one of the swindlers who in his days of innocence had relieved him of his wages.

But the career of a professional trap-boy, like that of a juvenile musical prodigy, is of necessity brief. His utility decreases with experience, for he gets known. By the time Jim had been the instrument for locking up a dozen walnut merchants he was told he had outlived his obscurity, that he was getting too famous.

The force of this argument was brought home to him one day when, on putting his shilling on the table of a new walnut merchant in sure and certain hope that the pea was not under the shell he had gambled on, he received a staggering blow on a Kaffir's most vulnerable point, the stomach, and gathered himself up in time to see the merchant and his confederates disappearing round a corner.

Jim took his discharge from the police and a railway ticket for the Natal border. Work on the mines was no longer either a necessity or allurements, for he had a plan that could be best matured in the peaceful atmosphere of his native kraal.

He had also three sets of walnut shells and rubber

peas, and an expert acquaintance with the lights and shades of the game. That was all he had after three years on the mines. He even had to do the journey from the Natal border to his kraal, 150 miles away, afoot, having barely sufficient cash in hand to purchase food on the journey. Yet, when he reached the kraal a month later, his possessions required the stowage capacity of a large tin trunk, while the odds and ends attached to his back, waist and shoulders recalled pictures of colonial irregulars returning after a looting expedition.

Jim resumed the arcadian life among his people in a kraal under the Drakensberg, entertaining the women with stories of his adventures in the Gold City and the men with the pea and walnut shells.

Slowly but surely the loose cash in the kraal gravitated to the pouch of Jim; then, in lieu of cash, he accepted such portable articles as are dear to the unsophisticated native. Within a month he either owned or had a lien on every concertina in the kraal, enough paraffin lamps to supply a coolie temple with illumination on the coolie Christmas, and, but for the vigorous interference of the wives, a paralysis of the agricultural industry would have resulted, for the gamblers began punting against the bank with hoes and sickles.

The last thing a native will part with is his livestock. One bold sportsman, who had literally broken up a comparatively happy home by staking the goods and chattels in a futile effort to get even with Jim, came one day with a kid, which he promptly lost. The example caught on, and Jim soon had to employ a herd boy to look after his rapidly increasing flock of goats.

He had begun to hint that, like the advertising bookmakers, there was "no limit," and that he was prepared to accept oxen as stakes, when the chief induna, who had steadfastly refused to play, began to make remarks.

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He had noticed, he said, that certain people won as regularly as the crowd lost. These lucky individuals were Jim's prospective father-in-law, his favourite of seventeen brothers, the witch doctor who practised in the district, and two Kaffirs who had served several years on the mines and had learned the game.

Jim was hardly likely to be nonplussed by insinuations of this kind. He had heard that sort of talk before in Johannesburg, and withered the induna by sarcastically retorting that it was not his fault if some people had more brains than others. He had no more open opposition from that quarter for some time.

But chief indunas don't take snubs from unringed young Kaffirs lying down. He had a talk with the chief, whose attention had been directed to what was going on by the fact that an abnormally large number of his young men were finding it necessary to go to work to earn money. His favourite son and possible successor had also fallen to the allurements of the game, had become chronically short of cash, and had hinted at surrendering his reversion to the chieftainship in favour of a brother for a prompt cash consideration. The chief decided it was time he took a hand in the game, so he sent for Jim and his outfit.

"I want to know," said he, "why the only people who do not lose, but who, like you, get rich at this game, are your friends? Why is it that others do not also win? I am going to play, also your father-in-law and the fortunate ones. If what you say be true, that you do not bewitch the pea in their favour, we shall win and lose as the others, neither better nor worse. If we continue to win we shall know that there is witchcraft, for no man can be always right."

The proposition seemed fair enough, and, strong in his knowledge that brains must tell in the end, Jim took the bank.

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The chief, as became his exalted state, punted with a sovereign, which he borrowed from the induna. Instead of keeping the pea between his fingers, Jim gave the chief a chance by placing it under a shell so awkwardly that a child could have spotted it. The chief noticed the bungling business and was wary. He backed another, and lost.

Unfortunately for Jim he could not repress his jubilation at the annoyance of the chief. He chuckled irritatingly. Long absence from the kraal and a career of success and worship since his return had rendered him careless or forgetful of the respect due to a chief. Besides, there was something peculiarly flattering and delightful to a young unringed native in feeling that he held his chief in the hollow of his hand.

Next time the chief punted a sovereign of his own, the induna saying he had no more to lend. The demon of defiance took possession of Jim. Instead of giving his chief a chance he kept the pea in his hand, and as each of the other players out of respect backed the chief's walnut, Jim scooped the pool with an indecorous yelp of triumph and the Zulu equivalent for the Johannesburg walnut merchants' customary emollient ejaculation "Right O! The old man wins this time! Keep your wool on, Johnny. Never say die!"

The representative of a dynasty was annoyed. The loss of two sovereigns was bad enough, but to be exhorted to keep his wool on, and to be addressed as Johnny, was heaping insult on injury.

He glanced meaningly towards the hut pole, where hung a formidable knobkerrie. Jim's quick eye followed the chief's.

"Inkoos," said he, "you spoke wisdom when you said no man—not even you—can be right every time. This game is a strange one. It runs on numbers. You have lost twice; you will lose a third time; then you will win.

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Put a small piece of money down and see that I speak truly."

The chief hesitated and looked inquiringly at his induna, who signalled "go on."

The chief laid down a sixpence gingerly and indicated the centre shell. Jim's prophecy came true. The pea was not there.

"And now I shall win, you say?"

"Yes, Inkoos."

"Then I put down ten sovereigns."

Jim winced. That meant nearly a tenth of his cash winnings.

"I don't see the money down, Koos."

"I have not them now. You must think they are there—ten sovereigns. I put them on the middle shell."

The pea was there. It was the chief's turn to be jubilant.

"Ow! You speak truth, Mafuta. I have won. Give me ten sovereigns."

"Inkoos, I have not ten sovereigns. Besides, we were only playing at thinking money."

The chief rose, as did his regal wrath. "You must pay me now, or——"

Jim had seen too many rows over the walnut shell table to be flustered by threats. He smiled placidly.

"Inkoos, my money is being taken care of for me by Charlie, the white storekeeper. I will get some and pay you to-morrow."

"Then we will play again—this time for twenty sovereigns."

Jim looked under all three shells, then on the ground searchingly.

"Inkoos, I cannot play more. I have lost the pea."

He had not. It was safe in his capacious nostril.

The chief reached for his knobkerrie, and Jim slid through the low arched doorway.

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His voice came over the veld as he ran.

"Koos, I go for your money and a new pea."

It looks as if the storekeeper did not keep that brand of pea, for Jim has since been seen in Durban, where he thrives by lending money to finance ricksha boys who are in arrear with their hiring money.

CHAPTER V

GUN-RUNNING

Abel Erasmus's Native Intelligence Organisation—Natives as Observers—Kafir Telepathy—Magato a Great Chief—He Snubs Paul Kruger—A Calabash of Diamonds—Torture not Practised by Natives—Gas-pipe Rifles—Erasmus and Gun-runners—Magato's Ambition a Machine Gun—Walters' Attempts to Satisfy it—Mr. Hobson, Music-seller and Gun-runner—The Bluffing of Erasmus—Erasmus's Proposed Last Stand.

THIS is not the place or the occasion for opening up a controversy on that two-sided and never fairly dealt with question—Boer native policy. The subject matter of this chapter is an individual rather than a party, but one who for many years was probably the unconscious author of that system of native control which, despite the adverse criticism of ardent negrophilists, is admitted by most competent judges to have been at once a surprise and success in the Transvaal.

Abel Erasmus, for many years Native Commissioner of the Lydenburg District of the Transvaal, was in many respects as great a man as any of the Boers who have made history, but, unlike them, he had neither apologist nor critics on a grand scale. Locally, and even in the Parliament House, he and his policy were at remote intervals the subject of a few remarks when native affairs were under discussion; but to the average non-political Transvaaler Abel Erasmus was a name that conveyed little.

The Lydenburg District is the most densely populated native portion of the Transvaal. For many years its contribution of hut tax to the Treasury has been more than

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treble that of any other native district. It is also geographically and ethnologically the most interesting portion of the colony. Lydenburg is the jumping-off place for the Northern Territories, for Portuguese East Africa, and for Swaziland. The native tribes whose kraals dot every hillside in this romantic region are strictly composite, since they are connected directly or indirectly with practically every great native race that has flourished between the Limpopo and the Orange River. Authorities have found among them types of origins from as far north as the Ethiopian and the Soudanese, and certain it is that among the kraals of the Lydenburg District are to be met characteristic examples of every native quality, from the highest courage and ignorance to the lowest pusillanimity and foxy intelligence.

It used to be said that every native indaba echoed against the rocks of the Ohrigstad, which was a picturesque way of suggesting that the doings of Kaffirland were known to the natives of the Lydenburg District almost immediately. Like most axiomatic generalisations, this one is an exaggeration, but it is none the less a fact that Abel Erasmus was the best-informed white man in the land when native affairs were matters of import to the ruling race.

"You must tell Abel," and "What will Abel say?" were the stock ejaculations of every induna when an item of news of any import reached a kraal, and by encouraging this newsmongering the Lydenburg Native Commissioner built up a system of native intelligence that has had no equal in the land.

It would not be taken amiss by the subject to say boldly that he was a despotic tyrant in his treatment of the teeming thousands of natives under his charge. He more than once so described himself, and justified it by the freedom from internecine strife and rebellion that characterised his reign. Like most tyrants, Abel was

sensitive to public opinion while appearing to despise it, and one of his first questions on visiting a kraal or receiving a call from a native emissary was, "What are your people saying about Abel? What do you know?"

Naturally the old man got oceans of lies and flattery, but a pearl of truth occasionally came to hand. He was always particularly interested in hearing of the doings of any white man who passed among the kraals, be he Boer, Briton, or any "white from across the blue water." The powers of minute observation possessed and practised by the Kaffir have never been fully described or appreciated. He may not have the skill of the bushman or the Australian black in following up a spoor and deducing tangible visions from the pressure of a foot on a pebble, but what he has seen, if only in a momentary glance of the eye, he remembers, and can describe in microscopic detail long afterwards. He is content to leave it to the white man to piece together the lines and colouring and construct therefrom his picture.

The present writer once visited Erasmus at his farm in the marvellous Ohrigstad Valley, starting from Bremersdorp in Swaziland. The journey, taken very leisurely, occupied five days, with numerous halts for sport, rest, visits and the dozen distractions that beguile a journey by ox wagon and saddle.

In narrating to him an incident of our journey, one of the party made some trivial error of detail. He was promptly pulled up by the Commissioner.

"No, that is not true. You did not do that till next day at the first outspan." And he proceeded to give us our itinerary from the hour of our leaving Bremersdorp till we outspanned on his farm.

"Ja, I have wonderful eyes," was his only answer to our question, "How do you know all this?"

Those wonderful eyes of Abel Erasmus never slept.

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No Boer saw so much without leaving the stoep of his farmhouse. He knew exactly what mining material passed up country to the Murchison Range mining camps; what prospectors from Barberton or the Rand were at work in his domain; whether they had found anything, were likely to stay or pass on. Day by day he received his reports, and without the necessity for giving instructions or inciting to extra diligence. The kitchen gossip of every homestead within a week's trek was repeated on the stoep of the fortress-like homestead in the Ohrigstad Valley. There was not a wayside canteen or hotel within a hundred miles where there was not a Kaffir kitchen- or house-boy who acted as eyes and ears for the grim old Boer whom many of them had never even seen. Although far out of reach of the telegraph, Abel was rarely more than an hour or two behind the residents of the dorps in wire connection with Pretoria; and it is said that he received the news of Jameson having crossed the border within three hours of that event being known in Johannesburg, a circumstance that can only be adequately surprising to those who know the remoteness of the Ohrigstad.

And hereby hang many startling stories of that perplexing and never satisfactorily settled puzzle known as Kaffir telepathy. The evidence is overwhelming in support of the assertion that the Kaffirs possess some means of conveying news over great distances under circumstances which preclude the possibility of the agency being any known material means. The story told by Mr. Rider Haggard of how he heard the news of the disaster at Isandhlwana, over 200 miles away, within a period too short to admit of ordinary methods of transmission, is a leading case.

A condensed version was contributed by Mr. Haggard to the *Spectator* by way of corroboration of similar cases told by the writer.

The letter ran :—

SIR,—

As bearing on the letter of Mr. D. Blackburn which appeared in the *Spectator* of December 13th, the following incident may interest your readers. About twenty hours before men, riding as fast as horses could carry them, brought the news of the disaster at Isandhlwana to Pretoria, an old Hottentot, my washerwoman, informed me of what had happened as an item of interesting news while delivering the clean clothes. She said that Cetewayo had gained a great victory, and that the *rooie-batjes* (redcoats) lay upon the field of battle "like winter leaves beneath a tree." I remember I was so impressed with her manner that I went down to the Government offices to repeat to my superiors what she had said. If I recollect right, she stated that the defeat had taken place on the previous day (January 22nd, 1879), but my late friend Sir Melmoth (then Mr.) Osborn pointed out to me that it was impossible that such tidings could have travelled two hundred miles or so in about twelve hours. Nevertheless, it proved perfectly correct. As to the method of its conveyance I hazard no opinion. The theory that intelligence is conveyed with extraordinary rapidity among the Bantu peoples by men calling it from height to height would, however, appear to be falsified by the fact that in this instance it must have come across the great plain of the high veld.

I am, Sir, etc.,

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

The successful news-collecting agency of which Abel Erasmus was the founder was the means of checking several attempts on the part of adventurers to run guns into the Magato country, the region in the north-east corner of the Transvaal ruled for many years by a remarkable chief named Magato. This picturesque heathen, alone among the native rulers within the control and

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geographical influence of the South African Republic, had maintained absolute independence. He not only refused to acknowledge the Boer supremacy, but carried out his defiant attitude by refusing to pay hut tax, and forbidding right of entry to the country he called his own to any person of whom he disapproved.

About 1894 the late General Joubert was sent with a small escort on an attempt to persuade the truculent old chief to acknowledge the overlordship, or at least pay a bit on account of the arrears of hut tax.

"Are you Paul Kruger?" Magato demanded.

The general explained that he was a sort of chief induna to the President of the Republic.

"Go back and tell your chief that I am as great a chief as he is, and that if he wishes to have an indaba (discussion) he must come himself to see me. I do not talk to indunas."

That was all the general got and he had to be content. During the lifetime of Magato the Boers were fearful of undertaking a punitive expedition for two reasons; they had an exaggerated idea of the strength of the Magatese, and an equally erroneous impression as to the fever-ridden character of the country. In the late 'fifties a party of Boers founded a settlement there, but the majority of them were carried off by malaria, which is bad during the wet seasons in the districts near the Limpopo. The story of that plague has passed into a tradition, and did more to keep the country closed than the fear of the native inhabitants.

Despite the terror, a few bolder Boers did occasionally penetrate the recesses of the unknown and brought back attractive reports of the desirableness of the land. But it was not until Magato had died and been succeeded by his gin-sodden son 'Mpfeu that the Government took their courage in both hands and sent a commando to effect the submission of the new chief.

'Mpfeu and his followers belied in a contemptible manner the reputation of the Magatese as a fighting race. They fired a few shots, killed two members of the commando, and skedaddled ignominiously over the Limpopo. 'Mpfeu's fate is as uncertain as that of Lobengula. Like the great Matabele chief he is said to have surrendered his kingly state and to be living quietly among an alien race in the far north.

Among the other traditions current about the alluring and mysterious country during the life of Magato was one to the effect that the chief was prepared to give a calabash of diamonds to anyone who succeeded in running in a machine gun, which was the darling ambition of his life. As he grew older and noted the increasing efforts of the whites to get a footing in his country, Magato became obsessed with an invasion mania. He particularly feared the Boers. The fate of Malabock and one or two neighbouring chiefs who had been deposed by the Transvaal Government was always before him. He resolutely refused to receive any white man in his kraal, saying, "When White man comes in Black man goes out." In order to avert his doom as long as possible he allowed no white to act as pioneer of the force that would some day oust him from the land of his many forefathers, and only encouraged visits from such whites as could assist him in laying in a stock of rifles and ammunition to enable him to meet his enemies on something like equal terms.

Of the ability of Magato to carry out his undertaking to pay in diamonds there was no suspicion. More than one man testified to having seen the stones. The amount varied between a pint and several gallons.

There was probability in support of the story. In the early days of Kimberley, and for five or six years until Magato forbade his young men to take employment in the mines, a large number of Magatese went to the dia-

mond fields. There was no compound system in force then, and no Consolidated De Beers, but a score or more of independent mines and as many debris heaps being washed, so that the facilities for "finding" stones were numerous for a keen-eyed Kaffir. Native etiquette demands that a returning subject should make a present to his chief. Not unnaturally the gift of the mine boys took the form of a stolen diamond.

No one who knows the country and its conditions doubts that Magato had a valuable collection; the only question was how many. The Kruger Executive certainly believed in the existence of the treasure, for it has been admitted authoritatively that the main objective of the commando that frightened 'Mpfu away was the diamonds. When the Hofstad was captured a vigorous search was made for the stones, and there are lurid stories of some of the departed chief's deserted wives being examined and persuaded to assist in the search by tickling the soles of their feet until they raved in hysteria. The treatment was a failure. It produced no diamonds.

In connection with this incident it is worthy of note that the circumstance provided the writer with the only bit of evidence that a long inquiry has produced as to whether the Kaffirs ever employed torture, as represented by a few writers.

It is generally believed, though on what authority is not clear, that Cetewayo tortured his brother Umbulazi to death by skinning alive and pegging him out over an ant hill, smearing the body with honey. Other writers, mainly fictionists, have introduced the subject and created an impression that this diabolical ingenuity in torment is or was a familiar native practice. Long and careful research has, with the solitary exception now to be narrated, brought no corroboration either of the ant torture or any other form as habitual at any period among the natives of South Africa.

While a Magatese woman was being treated in the manner described, an old Kaffir, a driver in the employ of the Boer commando, who was assisting by holding the victim, remarked :

"This is foolishness. She cannot say what she knows because the tickling makes her mad and she cannot talk. You should put her on an ant heap with her body rubbed with fat. The ants work slowly, so that she will have time to talk."

Unfortunately those present who heard the suggestion were not sufficiently interested in native manners and customs to follow up the matter by inquiring where the old Kaffir had seen or heard of his recipe. It may have been an experience, but it is quite as likely that the idea was conveyed to him in a question by a white man at some period.

The illicit supplying of arms to natives, colloquially known as gun-running, has for long been a recognised business, despite the risk and, what probably weighs little with adventurers who are not likely to suffer from the effects of a native rising, the serious moral aspect of the crime. At one time the various South African Governments could afford to regard the matter lightly. The guns supplied were almost invariably of the gas-pipe pattern, purchased in Birmingham wholesale at four and ninepence apiece, and much more likely to be dangerous to the user than to the person aimed at, particularly if the powder supplied with the burlesque guns had any driving force. But as this was of a quality in keeping with the "rifle," the Boer had little fear of a Kaffir with firearms. The assegai was a hundred times more potent.

The trade in gas-pipes and charcoal went on for many years, and more than one now respected and prosperous South African importer has the reputation of having laid the foundation of his fortune on law-breaking.

But there came a time when the guileless savage could

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no longer be imposed upon with bogus rifles. The chiefs had seen the real thing and began to be connoisseurs in up-to-date firearms. The concession hunter who offered a gun as a bait to a chief had to satisfy him that it was really a gun. Magato became an expert judge of every kind of firearm, and before accepting one even as a compliment, submitted it to a prolonged series of trial tests that would have satisfied the most conscientious Government official selecting a new weapon for the use of the army.

It was Abel Erasmus who first pointed out to the Executive at Pretoria that the day of the gas-pipe was gone. In his capacity as Native Commissioner he made a surprise descent upon a remote Kaffir location and searched for arms. The result astonished and alarmed him. More than a hundred effective weapons of modern pattern were brought to light, and probably thrice that number remained concealed. The only consoling feature in the business was that the gun-runner could not resist his natural propensity for defrauding the native. The bulk of the cartridges supplied with good rifles were either filled with coal dust or were misfits.

Magato had long heard of the machine gun. The native version of Ulundi and the terrible execution wrought there upon the Zulus had impressed him greatly. A few years later he journeyed incognito to Portuguese territory on purpose to see for the first time a Gatling gun in possession of an advance post of the Delagoa Bay troops. He was fortunate in witnessing an exhibition of its capacity, paying for twenty goats to serve as targets at a range of 300 yards.

From that day Magato's sole ambition was to possess a machine gun, and many were the overtures made by unscrupulous whites. But Magato was a shrewd dealer. He wanted a better guarantee for delivery of the goods than the white adventurers could offer. It was in vain

that they endeavoured to get something on account. The old man was adamant.

"If you can get a gun, you can get money to pay for it. When I see it at my kraal, and have killed twenty goats with it as I saw done by the Portuguese, then the calabash of stones is yours to choose from."

How many *bona fide* efforts were made to earn that calabash of diamonds will probably never be known, but two interesting cases are on record. The earliest was the Walters' expedition, which was engineered by an adventurous elderly Englishman who was among the diggers on the alluvial goldfield at Lydenburg in 1884. While there he heard of Magato's offer. What steps he took to verify it do not appear, but he was apparently satisfied that the attempt was worth making, for he spent all that he had, some hundreds, in coming to England and getting a machine gun of the Gatling type manufactured. His cash running short, he was fortunate in finding a young man who had just come into a legacy. Him he enthused with the prospect of a speedy fortune, and the necessary money was put up to complete the gun, and, what was equally important and costly, to arrange for its transport to the kraal of Magato.

Walters appears to have been a man of ingenuity and resource. In order to divert suspicion in the event of discovery, the gun was got up to resemble a pump. A screw cap on the muzzle had some hose attached, and a piston and valves were provided, though, of course, not fitted. The general appearance of the machine would have deceived any casual examiner, who would have had no just ocular reason for suspecting that it was anything except what it was invoiced as—a pump for hydraulic mining. The terms of the purchase included a quantity of ammunition, and in the concealment of these Walters exhibited the adroitness of a Kimberley illicit diamond merchant. No attempt was made to conceal the gun beyond

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disguising its character, but the cartridges were not so easily misrepresented. The supposed pump was accompanied by an elaborately complex wooden arrangement of three-by-four-inch timbers. These were supposed to be the head-gear and framework for fixing the pump in position. The timbers were actually composed of half-inch boards, and contained 100,000 cartridges, which, to the credit of Walters' honesty, were genuine and guaranteed to "go off."

A safe passage was made to Delagoa Bay, where Walters and his partner landed, and, having satisfied the omnivorous Customs, engaged native carriers to transport the pump to Lydenburg via Steynsdorp. It was a round-about way to Magato's kraal, but the only possible. Horse sickness and the tsetse fly rendered transport by other than carriers impossible, and, not being conversant with the native language, Walters had to engage a Portuguese agent to superintend the carriers. The second day out the agent demanded an advance on the sum agreed; but Walters was not the man to be played with in this fashion. He knocked the man down, and having brought him to a condition of mingled fear and contrition, the journey was resumed. Next day three of the fifteen carriers deserted, which gave the Portuguese a pretext for re-urging his demand for better terms on the grounds that the work was too hard for the natives, the parcels being, it was alleged, too heavy. By way of demonstrating its portability, Walters threw one of the bogus timbers across his shoulders, but in doing so brought it into sharp contact with a boulder. There was an ominous crack, and next instant a number of cartridges fell to the ground, and the rascally Portuguese was master of the situation.

Walters had to capitulate and agree to an advance, but the reserve fund was not equal to the strain put upon it. After parting with his ready cash and giving written authority for payment on a Delagoa house, Walters still

found the man insatiable, so he relieved his exacerbated feelings with a sjambok applied to the agent and the native head-man, who sided with the mutineer, and bade the creatures clear out.

This they did, but they took all the carriers with them, leaving the gun-runners in a difficult part of the country encumbered with stores they were unable to move. Realising the probability of having the gun, which had cost so much, seized by the Portuguese officials, with whom their discharged agent had threatened to communicate, the pair made a supreme effort to hide it. They discovered a recess in the wall of a rocky-ridge, filled it with brushwood, and fired it, making a bed of protective charcoal. In this they buried the gun and about 20,000 rounds of ammunition. The task occupied them several hours, but they did not hurry, Walters knowing well the lethargic character of Portuguese officials. For once this estimate proved fallacious. Some hours before they were expected, a captain and twenty mounted soldiers appeared, and the pair were marched back to a military station near the present site of Ressano Garcia. They were locked up in a filthy native hut, swarming with every kind of loathsome insect that a dirty Kaffir kraal is capable of producing, and suffered horribly for five or six days, when they were released, and bidden to march to Lourenço Marques. It took them four days to cover the fifty-six miles. They lived on raw mealies (maize) all the time, and arrived in such a condition of rags and dirt that they were arrested as suspected characters and lodged in jail until an English resident came forward and stood sponsor for their good name and conduct, and later assisted them to Cape Town.

Thirteen years afterwards one of the writers took part in an expedition organised by the partner of Walters to recover the gun. Ten pleasant but strenuous days were spent in the search, but the guide could not recognise any

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reliable landmark. We found the remains of several articles which were identified as part of the stores of the unfortunate expedition, notably and strangely the vulcanite mouthpiece of a pipe, which was readily identified by the owner by peculiar teeth-marks. Part of the briar-root bowl lay near, bearing signs of having been bored through by ants or beetles until they reached the nicotine-impregnated portion. A pin passed into the holes showed that in no case had the perforations penetrated the nicotine-soaked wood. Acting on this hint of a check on the ravages of that scourge of Africa, the white ant, a series of experiments were made later by soaking wood in tobacco water. No white ant touched the preserved parts, but parts of the same piece not protected were bored through. We make a present of the suggestion to Colonials in search of a cure for the white ant plague.

The strangest find was an enamelled metal mug hanging on the branch of a sugar-bush. The branch had grown round the handle, which was embedded an inch and a half in the wood. We cut it away, and on cleansing the mug in hot water found it as white as when new. The partner remembered hanging up the mug on what was then a six-inch stump, and the occasion the second out-span after crossing the Transvaal border.

We made another curious find that gave us food for speculation after supper for several nights. Lying at the bottom of a shallow running stream, where it passed over bed-rock worn as smooth as paving stone, was a skeleton left hand and forearm, so small that they apparently had belonged to a child or woman. They were moored to the sandstone by a handcuff, one gyve locked round the wrist, the other partially cemented into the bed-rock. The cuff on the wrist was worn by the attrition of passing sand and pebbles to the thinness of a visiting card, and broke on being handled. The other was coated with a vegetable

growth, which on being cleaned off revealed a manufacturer's mark, but, unfortunately, indecipherable.

The second dash for Magato's calabash was engineered by a once well-known character on the Rand, of whom many strange stories were told, much that was sensational suspected, but very little known. He was philosopher enough to realise that the most effective method of fighting calumny was not to deny a charge, but tacitly admit it. If sufficiently preposterous, it refuted itself in time, with the result that those who had believed found themselves mistaken or deceived, and resolutely disbelieved any similar story in future through fear of ridicule.

There was not an adventurous and disreputable incident in the history of South Africa for a quarter of a century in which the Captain had not been suspected of taking a hand. To this day few men could safely undertake to prove the truth of any one of the sensational events with which the Captain has indisputably been associated. He is a genius at covering up his tracks and a marvel of courage in facing the music when suspected. More than once he has gone straight to the police office on returning from some adventure not sanctioned by the law, and demanded to know on what authority he was being talked about. His consummate capacity for bluff pulled him out of many a tight corner, as the story which follows proves.

In view of the elusive character of the hero, and bearing in mind the terms of our introduction of him to these pages, it may be well to preface the narration by the assurance that the leading facts were supplied to the writer by the Captain himself when under arrest at Pietersburg on suspicion of being concerned in the attempt to run a Maxim gun into Magato's country.

It was exactly a year before the introduction of Maxim guns into Johannesburg by the Raiders, but whence this particular Maxim came the chief actor in its importation would not say. He made its acquaintance at Delagoa

Bay, where it arrived inside the specially constructed wind-chest of a large American organ consigned to the Captain, whose name for the purpose was David Hobson, and his business commercial traveller. Accompanying the organ was a parcel of illustrated catalogues of musical instrument dealers and a dozen of that favourite and aggressive toy of the Kaffir, the cheap German concertina.

There was no difficulty in getting the goods through to Barberton, the Customs officials at Delagoa accepting the declaration of the character of the goods without demur. Neither did the field cornets in the Transvaal dorps express surprise at the incongruous cargo until the road to the kraal of Magato had been more than half traversed by "Mr. Hobson's" wagon.

The average Boer is as curious and unreticent as a child when a stranger appears whose business and baggage are not obviously explanatory. So long as civilisation in the shape of a mining camp or a farmhouse lay ahead, Hobson's story that he was taking an organ to some Boer or Briton was accepted. The presence of the concertinas, which were ostentatiously displayed, also lent colour to the fiction. But when the course steered showed the most dull-witted Boer that the objective of the traveller could not be either farm or mining camp the questions became embarrassing.

It was the season when many Boers trek from their winter quarters in the warm low veld back to their farms on the higher ground; consequently passers-by were more numerous than desirable. The Captain speaks the Taal and knows the Boer, an advantage that had its drawbacks, since he had no excuse for not joining in long conversations and answering the numerous awkward questions put as to his cargo, course and business.

By one of those dramatic coincidences usually confined to fiction and the stage, the great Abel Erasmus happened to be on the line of route, engaged in an investigation into

a tribal fight or something a little bit out of the common. Now the Captain had good reason for not wishing to meet Abel, apart from the immediate cause. A year before he had roused the wrath of the irascible and domineering commissioner by carrying off a number of boys for work on the mines without consulting him. Some of the darkest chapters in the history of the Captain concerned his doings as a native labour agent. He was unscrupulous and successful, being able to recruit labour at times and under conditions that other less strenuous agents found impossible. There is reason to believe that his methods would scarcely meet with the approval of the Aborigines Protection Society, and it is certain that he was never able to revisit the scene of one successful recruiting.

When he heard that the native commissioner was expected to pass the night at the farm where the Captain had outspanned with the intention of doing the same thing, he committed a serious tactical error. He pretended to discover that he had left an important parcel at the last halting-place, ordered his horse to be saddled, and, ignoring the offers of his host to send a Kaffir, or even one of his sons, rode off into the veld on the backward track.

An hour later a Kaffir reported to the farmer that he had passed a white man preparing to camp out in a kloof less than a couple of miles distant and well off the road that the Captain should have taken if his journey had been genuine. When Erasmus arrived at sundown this item of news was communicated to him, and he announced his intention of detaining the wagon until the owner reappeared. He was suspicious of Rooineks who rode away as soon as they heard that he was coming, he said.

Meanwhile the Captain was marking time in the wooded kloof. He slept there during the night, and watched impatiently for signs of the passing of Erasmus. By noon hunger drove him to a distant native kraal, where he learned from Kaffir gossip that Abel was waiting

at the farm for him. He got a messenger to carry a whispered instruction to his Kaffir wagon-driver to slip away after dark bringing certain articles, and returned to the kloof.

The Kaffir appeared in due course, and the Captain proceeded to put into operation the scheme he had thought out in the solitudes of his waiting and watching. With an aniline pencil, he covered his face, hands, arms and all the visible parts of his body with spots, then rode to his wagon. At daybreak his Kaffir, acting on instructions, went to the farmhouse and announced that his baas had been taken sick with the smallpox, and was going to move far away into the veld lest he gave the disease to others.

There is nothing earthly that the Boer fears more than smallpox. Had the Jameson Raiders entered the Transvaal in smallpox ambulance wagons, they could have passed through in safety.

When the party in the farmhouse received the message of the Kaffir, shouted from a safe distance, they yelled to the children to come indoors, and from the window thankfully watched the departure of the stricken Rooinek and his wagon. The Captain showed his disfigured face from beneath the wagon tilt, waved a feeble parting salute, and passed away with a chuckle at having again scored off the Rooinek-hating Abel Erasmus.

The smallpox trick answered admirably in keeping off undesirable visitors, white or black, but it had a disagreeable back-kick action. News travels fast in Kaffirland, and whenever the wagon approached a native kraal it was warned off by assegai- and rifle-armed natives. It was only by boldly raiding the undefended kraals and mealie gardens that food could be obtained, the natives refusing to come near for the purpose of selling. A swoop on a kraal during the absence of the men on a beer-drink at a neighbouring kraal supplied the travellers with live fowls and mealies enough for a week, but the money left on a

stone in payment remained there until a witch doctor had been called in to remove the "pokkies" from the coins, a ceremony which cost two-thirds of the sum disinfected.

But, although temporarily checked, Abel Erasmus, like the foiled villain of melodrama, metaphorically soliloquised in the Taal equivalent for "No matter; a time will come." His emissaries were not only on the track, but well ahead of it. The Rooinek was kept under strict observation, for Abel had made up his mind that the wagon contained one thing he meant to get into his hands, and that was the Rooinek who had been recognised by half a dozen natives as the labour agent who a year before had practically kidnapped a party of boys under the very nose and in impudent defiance of the native commissioner, who had thereby been robbed of his commission of £1 per head. Hunger and fate were working silently on behalf of the vengeance-seeking Erasmus. A fortnight after the escape the Captain found his way barred by a petty chief, who not only refused to supply food, but threatened to shoot the oxen if they advanced or were outspanned anywhere in the wide district covered by the native location.

The Captain was put on his mettle. He sent the wagon back a mile or two, then rode boldly to the kraal and demanded an interview with the chief.

In the course of an hour he reaped the reward that generally awaits pluck and pertinacity. The chief consented to listen to what the Captain had to say.

The request was for food and the services of a guide to the edge of the Magato country, the payment to be one rifle and fifty rounds of ammunition. It was a tempting bribe, also a dangerous one. The chief asked for time to consider, and in this case the adage that asserts the man who hesitates is lost came true. The chief hesitated for half a day, then consented, and was lost.

So was the Captain. The wonderful eyes of Abel Erasmus, though eighty miles away, saw that rifle handed

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over in the gloom of the chief's hut, and his ears heard the instructions given to an old Kaffir to go with the white man as far as the river that was the boundary of the country of Magato.

The chief carried out his agreement, as Kaffirs of his class generally do, and the wagon was within a couple of treks of the promised land when a cloud of dust a mile or two behind signalled a fast-travelling party of horse-men.

Half an hour later the Captain was the prisoner of the native commissioner of the Lydenburg district, Abel Erasmus, and the charge was the serious one of supplying a native with firearms and ammunition contrary to the law.

The wagon was searched, the American organ opened in a manner that suggested that picks and shovels were employed in lieu of a screwdriver. Even the harmless concertinas were ripped up, but nothing incriminating was discovered.

For some reason not very clear the Captain was taken to Pietersberg instead of the nearer Lydenburg. There he lay in the jail for a month, calm, serene and genial, popular with the jailer and sympathised with by every white man and woman in the dorp, not because of his offence, but for his charming personality. The women sent in food and the men stood him as many drinks as he would accept, when of an evening the jailer took his prisoner to the canteen for an hour or two.

Four months later the Captain turned up at his old haunts at Johannesburg, his "fit" appearance supporting his statement, in reply to inquiries, that he had been up country doing a little shooting and prospecting.

There is an interesting mystery surrounding the doings of the Captain during the two months that elapsed between his release from the jail at Pietersberg and his reappearance in Commissioner Street. The only thing certain is

that there is no record of any prosecution of him for supplying arms to natives, or any other indictable offence. There is—or was, for he is lying on the field of Elandslaagte—a Boer official who, under the influence of wine, would take up the story and fill in the hiatus thus :

The Captain wrote to the State Secretary from Pietersberg telling him how he had been offered a calabash of diamonds by Magato's chief induna if he would procure a machine gun. That he pretended to fall in with the offer, and procured a dummy gun, but was prevented from delivering it by the officiousness of Abel Erasmus. That he was prepared to go to Magato to verify the existence of the diamonds and glean certain information about a white man—a refugee from the Transvaal, wanted for murder—who was said to be acting as adviser to Magato and counselling an attack on the Boers.

The story goes on to tell how the offer was accepted; that the Captain visited Magato, found the white adviser there doing what was reported, and saw more raw diamonds than had ever been seen outside Kimberley.

The sequel came in 1897, when a commando was sent against the Magatese, and for the first time in their history collected hut tax from them.

“And what became of the gun, Captain ?”

The Captain winked.

The “wonderful eyes” of Abel Erasmus were kept very wide open during the Boer War, particularly the latter period of it: They worried General Plumer much when he was clearing the northern Transvaal. The supposed neutral and British-loving Kaffirs of the district were to a man the loyal agents of the great native commissioner who lay low in his stronghold making a bold but futile plan for provisioning the Ohrigstad valley, gathering there the surviving stalwarts and holding out until the

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British were compelled either to evacuate the land or offer favourable terms.

His minions carried his messages to every scattered commando; but the replies were chilling. The Boers whom he sought to convince of the excellence of his scheme knew more of British "stickatitness" than Abel did; they had been long, and still were, meeting and fighting them.

The refusal broke the spirit of the once ironclad Abel. He went in to Lydenburg, surrendered to the British commandant, and sent messages to his countrymen still in the field to go and do likewise.

This same Abel Erasmus who once boasted that no British Rooinek should ever enter his house is to-day a loyal British subject.

CHAPTER VI

"THE LICENTIOUS BRITISH GARRISON"

Dreariness of Transvaal Garrison Life in 1880—The Safety Valve—
Puritanical Boer Censors—The Concomitants of a Garrison Town—
Two Female Spies—Owen Lanyon Impervious to Advice—Kruger's
Estimate of the British Army in 1880—Piet Joubert's Only Score off
Kruger—The Secret of Boer Charges of Licentiousness—The Excesses
of Tommy Atkins—The Alleged Drunkenness of British Officers—
A Hollander's Vengeance—Wholesale Desertion by Troops—Assisted
by Women

SOUTH AFRICA has never been popular with the Army as a military station, and probably no worse fate could befall an officer than garrison duty in the Transvaal during the periods of the British occupation in the late 'seventies. Pretoria and Potchefstroom were both geographically and humanly out of the world, and as isolated as if in the midst of the Atlantic. In fact, St. Helena, another *bête noire* of the troops, was by comparison a gay and highly civilised abode, for the frequently calling ships provided agreeable distraction and kept the islanders in touch with the outer world. Visitors to either of the Transvaal towns were rarities; the military and civil staff were thrown entirely upon themselves for two strong reasons. First, the average Transvaaler was very little removed from the rustic of an English village, and the majority of them were not at home with the language of their protectors; secondly, and worst of all, a pronounced antipathy, often brusquely declared, rendered intercommunication with the civilians anything but pleasant. Of course, a section of the British community supplied social requirements of a sort, but it is easy to believe that there was little in

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common between a British Transvaaler who had lived for years in the low levels of Boer intellectuality, and whose waking hours were almost exclusively occupied by business of a rudimentary and sordid type, and a typical British officer fresh from home.

Little cause for wonder, therefore, that now and then the military, in sheer desperation, indulged in mild outbreaks of individualism which, if noticed at all in broader centres, would be smiled at and passed over as venial, but in the Puritan atmosphere of a kerk-ridden Boerdom would be regarded as outrages calling for the correction meted out to Sodom and Gomorrah.

A letter from an officer of the 21st Fusiliers, who was in garrison at Pretoria in 1880, gives a graphic insight to the deadly dull life there at the period. The letter was written to the father of a young officer who had got into some now forgotten scrape that had called for official comment.

"The marvel is," he writes, "that our fellows do not kick over the traces entirely. Life here is provocative of every vice, not for vice's sake, but by way of protest against the aggressive morality not only of the Boers, but of the British who are only different from them in name and birthplace. They have all the narrowness of Scottish elders without their good qualities. . . . We are watched by them and their womenfolk like suspected schoolboys, and one well-meaning but impossible dame reports on us to the O.C. . . . Of course, it is not morality that prompts this solicitude, but a genuine belief that all British officers are scoundrels at heart, particularly those sent by the British Government to the Transvaal. Nothing can get it out of the head of the Boer that the old man (Sir Owen Lanyon, Administrator) has been selected purposely as an insult to the Boers, and we because we are the scum of the British Army. . . . They all believe that Lanyon has nigger blood in him.

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. . . One Englishman, who got well kicked for it, actually showed a pedigree supposed to prove that Lanyon was the son of a West Indian nigger. . . . I don't claim for our fellows that they are saints, or that they always comport themselves as exemplars of all that a British officer should be, but they are no less human in Pretoria than in London. . . . They live in the full glare of the limelight here, and a man has only to say 'Damn' to be looked upon as a blasphemer whose mouth needs washing with Condy's, or to chaff a Boer wench to be reported as a libertine. . . . I am picking up a bit of the awful patois they gibber in, and find it easier to get on in it with a Boer than to discuss intellectual matters with the average Britisher in our own language. . . . They are clods, and their conversation consists of bullocks and mealies, varied by mealies and bullocks. . . . Don't believe any yarns about our fellows being special scamps. It is the Boer line of attack on the garrison, and is helped by several so-called Britishers who are more Boer than the Boers themselves. . . ."

This officer is naturally a partisan, but there is every reason to believe that he puts the matter fairly. Ennui was the provocative, with that law of humanity which impels the majority of men to seek distraction in material rather than intellectual pleasures. At that period the leaven of culture had barely entered Boerdom. The sons and daughters of well-to-do Boers and Britons had not begun to go abroad for education, and return to act as pioneers of civilisation. Therefore the few women who could amuse and entertain were much in request.

It is worthy of note that the oft-made charge of undue feminine influence in the Service of which we heard during the last Boer War was made in Pretoria during the Lanyon regime, with this variation—that the influence was sinister and directed towards justifying the belief of the Boers that the troops sent to hold the country were a source

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of moral corruption as exemplars. It was also suggested that the women played a great part in closing the eyes of those in authority to what was really going on.

It is a matter of record that nearly every British official refused to attach any importance to the various agitations in the direction of independence. Major Lanyon was brusque and impatient with everyone who uttered warnings. He denounced them as alarmists and agitators, until few of the British residents who knew how events were shaping would venture to approach the gruff Administrator with information or suggestions. From the first until the other day this blind refusal to accept local knowledge and advice has been a provoking characteristic of British officials in South Africa, both civil and military, and the galling fact remains that there is scarcely a disaster to British arms or diplomacy in the long list, against which warnings were not issued by persons of local knowledge.

Among the private persons who counted in those days was a Mrs. X—, who kept a house of entertainment frequented equally by Boer and Briton. She was of Dutch colonial birth, but professed pronounced English sympathies. No woman in Pretoria was more in the secrets of the Boer leaders, and, though not in the Government set, she was in close touch with nearly every officer and civil servant. There is no question that she was in the fullest confidence of some of the leading Boers, and had her actions tallied with her professions she could, and would, have placed the British in possession of information more valuable than that collected by any secret service department. For the sake of the reputations of the officials it is to be hoped that she did not tell them what she knew. She, in later years, has said that she reported all she heard in the privacy of her private parlour to those on the British side to whom such knowledge would have been useful. Particularly she claimed to have heard of the proposed meeting at Paardekraal, where Boer independence was

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declared, three months before the event, and reported it to Government House. The proclamation forbidding the meeting was issued in such haste and so close upon the event that it is difficult to believe that Major Lanyon had had earlier information. The Boers used the shortness of the notice as a pretext for not obeying it.

If we can believe her, another colonial woman, a contemporary of the notorious Mrs. X——, acted as spy and informer on the British garrison in the interests of her countrymen. Oddly enough, she bore a British name, and made no secret of her Boer sympathies. Her peculiar business brought her into the company of the officers when they were at leisure, which was very frequently, and she made good use of her popularity. It is probable that in the earlier stages there was little cause for the members of the garrison to exercise any great caution and restraint in speaking of political affairs. There was no surface sign of the approaching trouble, and the most garrulous subaltern might chat under the influence of his hostess's champagne—paid for by the guest—without betraying a secret worth the trouble of noting, much less repeating. As the crisis approached the Boer leaders proved marvellously well informed as to all that was proceeding on the British side. The secession campaign was distinguished by moves anticipating the British. Whether they were the result of superior strategy or prior information cannot be definitely known, but the signs point to the latter.

The average Boer woman is a remarkably acute listener and interpreter of unconsidered trifles when it is to her interest to be so. The simplest answer to the most casual question put by her will often provide her with the key to many mysteries. Mrs. X—— and her colleague were of this type, and, viewed in the light of after events, there seems reason to believe at least some of the stories told in later years by Mrs. Z——, mainly to prove her claim to having once been a woman of importance. At the

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period of her anecdotage she was certainly nobody in particular, except to those who remembered her gaudy career in Pretoria.

One of her stories concerns a young officer of the garrison who, if her description is correct, was of the comic-paper type of dandy uniform wearer. His affectations and effeminacy amused the women greatly, and they entertained themselves by drawing him out and setting him talking of his brother officers and superiors. Some of the intimate revelations alleged to have been made by this untypical soldier bear internal evidence of genuineness, as they deal with matters which an illiterate colonial woman could hardly have invented. Mrs. Z——'s boast was that this gilded popinjay quite unconsciously kept her informed of all that she wished to know of the business of the garrison and Government House, a threat of not allowing him to kiss her being sufficient to extort any piece of information, however reluctantly yielded.

In the ordinary course one would naturally be disposed to accept such boastings with considerable reservation, particularly in face of the character of the narrator and her vainglorious struggle to pose as one having authority. On the other hand, we have the established fact that some officers did frequent her house, that she was in peculiarly intimate relationship with them, and that her friends the Boers did get early possession of information likely to be in the possession of some, if not all, of her clients. Delilah is as uniformly successful as she is universal.

Another factor calculated to render the extraction of information easy was the persistent refusal of Major Lanyon and some of his entourage to believe that any active discontent prevailed among the Boers. The idea in Pretoria, even among some of the old experienced residents, was that the Boers were too supine to rise to the magnitude of a struggle with Great Britain. They

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argued from their own point of view, knowing the strength of their people and the weakness of the Boers; they did not make allowance for that conceit of ignorance which enabled many Boers to believe that the entire British Army consisted of the spoonful of troops in the Transvaal, Natal and Cape Town.

Mrs. Z—— used to tell a story on the lines of that introduced by Rider Haggard into "Jess," wherein an old Boer vrouw expresses her belief that all the British troops in existence had been accounted for. Her story concerns Paul Kruger and a once prominent Boer, Hendrik Schoeman, who during the siege of Pretoria in 1880 posed as a loyalist, but supplied his compatriots with necessities and shelter at his farm a short distance outside the town. The subject of discussion was the actual strength of the British Army. Kruger at that time had not been in England, but, acting on the testimony of friends who had, he was prepared to go a point or two farther than the ordinary Boer and concede the possible existence in England of as many soldiers as were believed to be in South Africa. Schoeman, however, was more emphatic. He had the authority of an oprecht burgher who had seen and could be believed. In Boer fashion he proceeded to give his friend's words, presumably verbatim. The friend had apparently seen a review at Aldershot:

"Man! but you never saw so many people at once. Why the crowd on the Church Square at Nachtsmaal would be quite small by their side."

The force of the simile can be gauged when it is known that the crowd in Church Square on the occasion cited as partially parallel would at that period not exceed five hundred persons—men, women and children.

Another subject discussed by Kruger and the late General Piet Joubert in the presence of this lady was the policy of obtaining the same pattern rifle as that used by the British.

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Joubert supported it on the ground that when they captured British wagons the ammunition would suit their rifles. At the present the difference in the guns would render captured cartridges useless.

Kruger remarked that the argument would cut both ways, but Joubert clinched it :

"We Boers don't carry our cartridges in wagons, but on us."

To this Kruger retorted, "True; we can't afford to buy cartridges by the wagon-load."

"Then all the more reason why we should be able to use those we capture from the British," was the general's parting shot. It was perhaps the only time he ever scored over Paul Kruger in argument.

It ought, in justice to the dead President and General, to be added that these incidents occurred in the lady's presence, but not in her house.

To those who have been able to read between the lines immediately preceding, it will hardly be needful to hint more broadly at the *fons et origo* of the charges of licentiousness made against the Lanyon staff, nor to suggest that establishments such as those of Mesdames X—— and Z—— were quite new and strange to the Boers. To explain that they were a regrettable concomitant of most garrison towns was to confirm the general belief that the British soldier was innately immoral. Such institutions were foreign to the primitive Boer and an abomination which the Bible frequently mentioned in terms of strong reprobation. There was one predikant of the Dopper, or strict sect of the Dutch Church, who, in and out of season, made this subject a text for vigorous denunciation. So strongly did he affect his hearers that a secret plan was organised for raiding the houses and meting out Biblical retribution upon the proprietresses. The plot, however, was exposed in time, and not only a scandal but probably murder averted. The subjects were

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warned, and seized the opportunity afforded of taking such precautions as justified the champions of virtue postponing action.

It is easy to understand how stories of British licentiousness, confirmed by such reputable authorities as a predikant and his deacons, would lose nothing in the telling by the time they reached the homesteads of the veld and, in the absence of contradiction, become crystallised as hard fact.

Another count in the general charge was that the private soldier was a chronic drunkard. The vice of drunkenness is in no degree rooted among the Boers. Of late years a few town Afrikanders have successfully adopted this very British attribute, but the Boer of the veld is for various reasons a model of abstemiousness in the matter of alcohol. Therefore the occasional sight of Tommy Atkins being frog-marched to camp by the picket impressed and horrified the men of dorp and veld, and, in conjunction with the other matter, supplied material and basis for belief of any charge brought against a Rooinek.

It is almost superfluous to remark that the excesses of Tommy in Pretoria were probably no greater than those of his chums in any other garrison town in the Empire. The chances are that there was even less drunkenness in Pretoria because of the increased cost of liquor and the inadequately increased pay; but every regiment has its awful examples, and the Pretorian garrison was no exception. Unfortunately, in a small place the eyes of the inhabitants see everything in a small focus. A private could not get a week's C.B. or cells for being drunk and resisting the guard without the fact being known throughout town and district, and a text provided on the awful wickedness of the British. As to the officers, they were all marked men. There were among them several high-spirited youngsters who resented the perpetual espionage

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and civilian mentorship by affecting a dare-devilism entirely unnatural. They had not learned the danger of joking at the expense of very serious people. Their acting was taken for the real thing, and more than once there were conflicts between Boers and the military which, but for the intervention of level-headed and tactful persons, might have led to serious action.

One great source of trouble was the erroneous notions held by many newly arrived officers and youthful privates that the Boer maiden was not a model of reticent propriety. They took it for granted that a girl who lived the primitive and essentially unrefined life of the trek wagon could not be averse to being treated with levity. The natural result was many a rude awakening and a vendetta between the girls' male relations and the offenders. Naturally, every effort was made to hush up these scandals, a proceeding which, of course, only served to bring them the more into the limelight.

One incident became a sort of leading case and kept open a sore that, if left alone, would have healed in due course.

A non.-com. committed himself by a drunken raid on the house of a Boer during the absence of the males. He was unquestionably drunk at the time, and had broken leave under circumstances which might entail awkward consequences if taken notice of by the C.O. Fearing trouble in this quarter more than the threats of the Boer family, he paid over some forty or fifty pounds as "moral and intellectual damages." Very foolishly, when the story came out, as it was bound to do in such a small community, he told a circumstantial story of having been blackmailed by the girl's father. There is no reason to believe that there were grounds for the allegation. On the contrary, those competent to form an opinion were satisfied that the case was a very bad one, and that the non.-com. had got off very cheaply.

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Shortly afterwards a case occurred which looked very much as if a Boer had acted upon the hint contained in the leading case. He brought against a highly respected sergeant a charge of molestation, and demanded £50 by way of compensation and as an alternative to prosecution. The soldier very wisely laid the matter before his commanding officer, who held an inquiry that was not altogether satisfactory. It ended in a sort of compromise that left an unpleasant suggestion that there was fault on both sides, and—if anything—more on the part of the soldier.

A crop of blackmailing cases resulted, and the feeling between military and civilians became painfully strained. On the top of it came a scandal which, oddly enough, was repeated in almost every detail a few years later.

A Pretorian of colonial extraction but British sympathies of a commercial order had an attractive daughter whom he had earmarked as wife for a well-to-do young Boer. The girl had many admirers, and, being of a masterful character, defied her father's wishes by entertaining her beaux on the stoep during the absence of the old gentleman. Returning unexpectedly one evening, he found a young English soldier whom he specially disliked hiding in the stable. The youth, having a not unnatural delicacy about facing an irate parent, was awaiting an opportunity for getting away unostentatiously.

The father, a man of immense physical strength and an ungovernable temper, dragged the young fellow to the manger, tied him up in a painfully trussed condition, cut away part of his clothes, and administered a brutal flogging with a sjambok. Moreover, to add to the humiliation, he called in the Kaffir stable-boy, and made him lay on a few strokes.

So badly was the young fellow cut up that a sort of paralysis supervened, similar to that which sometimes

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attacks natives after release from the flogging triangle. Under its influence he remained unable to speak coherently for more than a week, so the cause of his injuries was a matter of mystery to his friends. When he was able to speak he told part of the story, suppressing many vital details, including the name of his assailant. It was the girl who let the public know the truth by way of spiting her father; but the victim refused to prosecute for fear of the disgrace of being branded as a white man who had been flogged by a Kaffir.

In the replica of this case a few years later the introduction of the Kaffir assistant was made the leading item. The victim was a young Hollander official; the indignantly vengeful father a Kruger official of some importance. The matter was brought to the notice of the President, who sided emphatically with the father, and forbade the Hollander to bring any action for redress under pain of dismissal from his post.

The sequel reads like the plot of a sensational novel. The aggrieved Hollander devoted his life to the gratification of his revenge, and the manner of it was so dramatic, long-drawn-out and diabolically ingenious that we tell it only with the prefatory assurance that we heard the story from the father himself, who attributed to the machinations of the Hollander some occurrences which might be explained by coincidence.

The Hollander remained in Pretoria, and, after the manner of his kind, obtained an interest in outside businesses which prospered. In the course of three or four years he became comparatively wealthy. On the other hand, his enemy had fallen out of favour with Kruger and was struggling to keep his savings. He had married a second wife, and now had a family of five boys and as many girls, ranging from a married son and daughter to a ten-year-old boy.

One day this youngster was seized with horrible in-

ternal pains which were diagnosed as dysentery, but after a narrow escape from death were traced to the effects of a peculiarly agonising form of native poison consisting of powdered bamboo. The minute and almost imperceptible spines can be conveyed through any form of food. They set up ulceration in the intestines, and in the majority of cases a horribly painful death is the result. The verdict in this case was that the poison had been purposely placed on two peaches which were given to the youngster by a strange Kaffir on the market square one morning. A week later the twelve-year-old daughter, returning from school, had some burning corrosive powder thrown into her eyes by a passing Kaffir whom she failed to identify. and came very near to blindness, after weeks of suffering. Next, the wife was attacked. A packet addressed to her, neatly made up, was found on the veranda, as if left by a messenger unable to get an answer to his knocking. It contained a fragrant dentifrice, which was used and produced injury to the gums and teeth. Analysis revealed a fifty per cent. admixture of sulphuric acid. Further incidents brought dismay into the home of the persecuted family during the year that followed. An ounce bottle of asafœtida was thrown into the sitting-room, and ruined the clothes of six persons taking part in a musical evening; a number of valuable Orpington fowls, then rare and expensive, was found dead, apparently killed by some animal of the wild-cat species purposely introduced into the fowl-house; two posts supporting the end of the veranda were cut away during the night, the object being obviously to injure the wife and daughters who sat much at that spot—this plot, fortunately, miscarried; two of the girls were injured in the street by being hit by large stones thrown by unseen hands; a favourite pony of the youngest daughter went lame suddenly, the apparent result of a smashing blow on the kneecap, and had to be destroyed. To these may be added several minor mis-

haps of an unusual character that might, however, be accounted for by natural causes.

The crowning blows came with the last Boer War. Two of the sons went on commando with the Pretoria contingent. The day before Elandslaagte one son was found dead in the veld, shot through the back of the head; the second met his death at Colenso in precisely the same way; a third was captured later and sent to the Bermudas, where he was twice pushed off the rocks by an unseen person, once nearly drowned, the second time lamed for two or three years.

In no instance was the presence of the Hollander near the scene of the outrage proved to satisfaction. He himself was captured just before the end of the war, and by some means was permitted to return to Holland, where he now is.

It is worthy of note that the Hollander was born in the Dutch East Indies, and was said to have Malay blood in his veins.

To the general charge of drunkenness brought by the Boer moralists against the British garrison, the obvious answer is that drunkenness is purely relative. Rightly or wrongly, the general opinion and custom among the Britishers in the country at that time were in favour of a free use of alcohol for reasons of health. It was a tradition brought with them by all officers who had served in tropical countries. Even to-day, in the light of improved knowledge and the possibility of obtaining water fit to be used as a beverage, there is more whisky drunk in the Transvaal probably than in any civilised country. Further, the canteen is a recognised rendezvous, often in small places the only one; therefore men can spend hours at or about a bar without suffering loss of character. As the use of the house entails the moral obligation of purchasing something, it can be readily understood that drinks are bought somewhat extensively and unnecessarily.

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If this be true of a Transvaal town to-day, it was much more so at the period of which we are writing, and no benefit can arise from denying that there was more hard drinking among every class save the Boers than was good for stomach or character. Further, it may as well be admitted that many a practical joke or boyish escapade was engineered by newly-arrived officers under the influence of the mess wine. The worst that can be said of these incidents is that they were foolish, and, especially in view of the strained relationship then existing between Boer and Briton, indiscreet and prejudicial in the extreme. It has been made a grievance against the commanding officers that it was useless to complain to them of the conduct of their subordinates. Doubtless a not unnatural partisanship was occasionally displayed, and perhaps more serious official notice should have been taken in some of the more flagrant cases; but it is equally certain that every complaint was grossly exaggerated. The Boer's attitude towards the larky young soldier was that of the old lady who is subject to the annoyances of spirited schoolboys who think they have a grievance against her. She is ever a biased and unreliable witness, apt to construe the most harmless annoyance into criminal and premeditated outrage. The old women of Pretoria were always crying "Wolf," and the moral of the fable applied; when the cry was justified, no one paid attention to it.

Another point may be conceded, because it explains much on both sides. The Government representatives, from Sir Owen Lanyon to the latest-joined subaltern, had the utmost contempt for the Boers and had nothing in common with them. They for the most part maintained a supercilious stand-offish superiority towards them, and in some instances the younger men did not hesitate to express their feelings openly in terms of insolent contempt, ridiculing some of the most cherished domestic usages, and taking no pains to conceal the feeling that they

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regarded themselves as degraded in having to spend their time among such people. Now and then some more than usually indiscreet officer or official would express his opinions strongly in a letter home, which found its way into a local paper, and back via a Dutch journal to the Transvaal.

In this connection an amusing incident happened whose recounting in later days has been the *casus belli* in several bitter fights between rival Transvaal journalists.

A young Britisher residing in Pretoria served with the Town Guard during the siege of the place in 1880. One morning the *Volkstem*, the Dutch daily journal then edited by Jan Celliers, came out with a letter which had been sent to England by the young fellow in question, and published by his proud father in the local paper. The letter was a graphic and highly imaginative account of an attack on Pretoria by the Boers, repulsed under the leadership of the narrator. The sting and humour of the letter lay in the contempt poured by the writer upon the local military leaders and his own heroic courage and resource at the moment of danger. He inferred that at the news of the assault the British leaders ran ignominiously to cover, followed by the majority of their men. Filled with indignation at such un-British pusillanimity, the hero stepped into the breach, and in the name of honour and the Queen called for volunteers to follow his leadership. A brief but pointed harangue was necessary before the courage could be brought to boiling point; but when it yielded to his eloquence it fairly boiled over. A sortie was made, headed by the hero, and the Boers fled for their lives, leaving the victors to return to laager laden with booty, what time they loudly acclaimed their young leader as the saviour of Pretoria.

Naturally, the unfortunate romancer had a very bad time, but as his attack on certain officers gratified many

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townsmen who had grievances against them, he did not suffer so badly as he might have done. During the rest of the siege he behaved very circumspectly, and largely atoned for his puerile gasconading. But he was not to escape. He was one day suddenly bidden to attend a crowded meeting of townsmen at the Transvaal Hotel. There a leading and eloquent Britisher mounted the stoep and amid plaudits announced that the object of the meeting was to present a certain heroic young fellow-citizen with a mark of their admiration and esteem. The presentation gift took the form of a handsome piece of plate. The box containing it was held up for public admiration, but owing to a badly-fitting key the plate could not be released. The spokesman proceeded to pay adulative tribute to the recipient—who stood in guard of two sturdy townsmen well in sight of the crowd—and added to the torture by reading the description of the imaginary assault as supplied by the victim. That ended, the subject was called upon for a reply speech of thanks. Very tactlessly he urged that he should be excused making a speech as he had not seen the gift. "That is soon remedied with a screwdriver," the chairman suggested. The implement was provided, the box prised open, and the piece of plate raised high for all to see before being formally handed to the recipient. He gave one glance at it; then rushed for his room, followed by a howling, laughing crowd. The piece of plate was an earthen article of domestic use which does not usually figure at presentations or on prize-lists!

There was one feature in the career of Madame Z—to which she often, in later days, referred with pride. She claimed to have incited more British soldiers to desert than had any person in history; and she used to say that if she had started the business earlier there would not have been a private left in the King's Dragoon Guards.

Here again we can only check her utterances by circumstantial evidence. It is a matter of shameful record

that the desertions from the regiments stationed in the Transvaal in 1880 were the highest ever known. General Colley, soon after his appointment as Governor of Natal and chief of the Army in the Transvaal, wrote to the Secretary of State for War, "I am sorry to say they (the troops) are deserting very largely," and in another letter he says, "The principal offence is desertion, to which the proximity of the Free State offers a strong inducement. . . . The desertions among the King's Dragoon Guards have been exceptionally heavy, especially since the regiment was put under orders for India. . . . One sergeant went away with about £200 of troop and canteen money."

The attitude taken by Madame Z—— in defending her conduct was that of the patriot. She declared, and perhaps believed, that the troops were greatly in sympathy with the Boers, and that all who deserted gave a promise that if they were assisted they would settle in the Transvaal and assist in the event of war with England. We know that many did so, but whether in fulfilment of their promise cannot be known.

We do, however, know as a fact that the lady in five cases lent money to troopers of the King's Dragoon Guards and provided transport for them to the Free State. In her later days, when adversity had followed on the loss of her youthful charms, she was befriended by a successful store and hotel keeper in the Transvaal who was admittedly a deserter from the King's Dragoon Guards.

There seems to have been a pretty general belief among the Boers that in the event of war they could count on the active assistance of many soldiers and the passive aid of more. Belief in the latter contingency was based on the knowledge that there was great discontent in the garrisons. The deadly dull life, the trying climate, the dearth of necessities, and the entire absence of luxuries obtainable in every other military station tended to provoke

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wide-spread discontent, and General Colley very soon recognised that this was the contributing cause, for he made recommendations for small additions to the soldiers' rations as a step towards reducing the temptation to desert. But red-tape prevented this sensible policy from being carried into effect until too late.

The desertions from the Pretoria garrison were carried out very ingeniously by Madame Z—— with the assistance of a male relative. The deserter would be concealed in the farmhouse of a friend situate somewhere near where Irene now stands, or in another farm on the Aapies River, and passed on from thence a few miles to another friendly homestead, until the Free State border was reached, when the deserters could proceed boldly to one of the dorps, where some sort of employment could be found. Those who were sufficiently educated, and some who were not, found work as farm tutors. A late prominent member of the Second Raad was entirely educated by one of these runaways. At the time he was taken in hand he was eighteen years of age, could neither read, write, nor speak English. At thirty years of age he would pass muster as an ordinary elementary school-trained man. He had the good fortune to have as tutor an exceptionally well-read Tommy, who had been a staff sergeant. To this day this Boer writes a hand based on the service style.

Of course, this connivance at desertion required the sympathetic assistance of more than one person, and it says something for the peculiar influence of Madame Z—— that she was able to command such service. Her initial care was to provide the deserter with mufti, so that he could pass as a Colonial. The uniforms she generally presented to other members of the regiment who had sold part of their kit to Kaffirs to raise pocket-money for indulgence in luxuries. In partial corroboration of her story, the lady told us where we could, on her recommenda-

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tion, see a chest full of uniforms that had come into her possession and been taken care of for years by a Boer in the Potchefstroom District, but we never took advantage of the privilege. It should, perhaps, be accounted to the lady for righteousness—or at least as proof of her patriotism—that she never made a grievance of the fact that she had from first to last expended over £150 in assisting deserters, all but about £25 being absolutely lost. Of that recovered sum, £10 was received anonymously from England, with a brief note of thanks signed with some pet male name that she could not recall, but recognised as having been bestowed by her upon one of “her soldier boys.”

Some years ago a serious quarrel, ending in a stabbing, arose in a Transvaal bar between two old stagers, Englishmen, who had been residing in the country since the period dealt with. It was mentioned in the evidence given in court that the quarrel was started by the repudiation of a money claim, which brought the retort from the other, “That’s how you treated Mrs. Z—— after she lent you £10 to desert with.” Then came the knife, followed by six months’ imprisonment. The phrase much puzzled the reporters. They were of another and newer generation.

CHAPTER VII

ILLICIT GOLD BUYING

Difficulty of Detecting Gold Thefts—Who are the Thieves?—How Gold is Stolen—The Copper-Wire Trick—The Illicit Gold Buying Gang's Methods—Trapping Unpopular—Swindling a Chief Detective—A Doctor as Receiver—Directors Suppress Facts of Robberies—Amounts Stolen Small in Bulk—A Blacksmith's Find—Lucky-bag Sales—Amalgam in Left Luggage—Police as Illicit Gold Buyers

THE gold-mining industry of the Rand was ten years old before it was found necessary to invoke the Government to pass a special law for the prevention of gold thefts. Probably, from the first month that the mines began to produce the precious metal, an undue share of it got into the hands of dishonest employees. It would have been surprising if it had not, in view of the very primitive conditions then in vogue both for extracting the metal and handling it before it was placed in the strong room of the bank. But as the processes of production grew more complicated, opportunities for abstraction grew also, till about 1894 the percentage of loss by theft had grown so large that the monthly output of several of the smaller mines showed a diminution on the average expected, and the subject became a matter of frequent comment and discussion at the meetings of the gold magnates' parliament—the Chamber of Mines.

The ordinary law of the land would have been sufficient for dealing with gold thieves but for the very special and peculiar conditions of the industry. It was easy enough to hand over to the police any man caught in the act of transferring the gold of the company to his own possession, but the difficulty was to catch the thief

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in flagrante delicto. The abstraction of gold had been reduced to a fine art, and the only means of detecting a culprit among the mine employees would have been to place a watcher at his side from the moment he entered the gold area till he left, and that for many weeks, or even months.

It is regrettable to have to reflect upon the character of any class, and especially when that class represents the cream of skilled labour—or, at any rate, a nominally superior type of workman—but cold logic forbids any specious effort to throw the responsibility for the gold thefts on to others. It is well nigh impossible for gold to be stolen by strangers or casual visitors to a mine. The only person in a position to extract, without attracting attention, sufficient gold to be worth taking away is the man who has long and uninterrupted access to the battery house, the cyanide vats and the closely-observed places where the raw gold is within reach.

Further than this, the collection of an ounce of gold by illicit means is a tedious operation extending over many hours, even when all the essential conditions are favourable. It is not too much to say that were a stranger given the run of every department, free from observation, he could not in an hour succeed in getting away unaided with sufficient gold in any form to pay the cab fare to and from the mine.

Like the process of gold recovery itself, stealing it is a highly technical and scientific operation, requiring time and special knowledge not usually at the disposal of the casual thief.

The vast bulk of the gold stolen was in the form of amalgam, and was removed from the plates by a long and gradual process of scraping, the amount taken at one effort probably not exceeding half a penny-weight.

To understand how the gold thief worked, it is neces-

sary to know roughly the method by which gold is extracted from the ore. Briefly, the process is this :

The stone containing the gold is fed under heavy iron-shod rods, which, constantly falling on it with great force, crush it to a fine powder. This powder is carried by water down an iron or steel plate about nine feet long and three or four feet wide, placed at a very slight slope to facilitate the flow of the half-inch stream of water and gold-bearing sand, which has the appearance of dingy-grey whitewash. The iron plate is coated with quicksilver. Owing to the affinity between this metal and gold, the tiny grains of the latter are caught by the quicksilver and retained—or, at least, all but a very small fractional percentage. At the end of a period ranging from twenty to thirty days the quicksilver is peeled off the plate. By this time it has the appearance and thickness of the lead-foil used as the inner wrapper of tea packages, except that it is darker and greasy-looking. This is beaten into lumps about the size of a cricket ball, and is worth, roughly, 30s. per ounce. The gold is extracted by retorting.

There are other methods of gold extraction not necessary to deal with here for the reason mentioned—that the bulk of the gold thefts are from the plates of the battery.

Of the various methods for abstracting the gold, the simplest is to scrape the plate with a thin-bladed knife, or even the finger-nail, at every opportunity; but the collection of an ounce of gold by this method is a long and lingering task, only undertaken when better and more scientific methods are not available.

One of the best known and most effective of the latter is to lay a piece of copper wire on the plate, either on the inner edge of the side or at the end. In the course of six or eight hours a deposit of gold will have formed on the wire.

This ingenious method of robbery was detected by a sudden demand by mine Kaffirs for copper wire. They

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would give as much as threepence an inch for a six- or eight-inch length, and even more. The game had been going on for a year before a battery manager detected it. It was accident that revealed the secret. A Kaffir in the battery house had by mistake put on the waistcoat of another native. A fight ensued, and the battery manager was called in to adjudicate upon the ownership of the garment. During the examination a number of small coils of copper wire fell from a pocket, and a great mystery stood revealed.

The boy confessed that he had been supplied with the wire by a "Peruvian" storekeeper, with instructions how to lay it on the plate. He gave the boy sixpence for each nine-inch length brought to him after being coated on the plate, and must have made a fine thing of the business, as a nine-inch piece of wire of the gauge used would collect more than a pennyweight of gold, worth nearly 4s. By whom this ingenious trick was first introduced to the Rand the police never discovered, but it answered well until this Kaffir exposed it. It was, fortunately, one of those ruses which cannot be repeated after detection—unless a battery manager were criminally negligent.

Realising the supreme difficulty of detecting the actual thief, the new law aimed at the receiver. It was based on the illicit diamond law in force at Kimberley, and made the possession of unwrought gold, without a dealer's permit, felony. A special detective force was told off to look after this new police department, and the early experiences of the illicit gold buying hunters gave cause for much laughter at their expense, for the chief detective and some of his subordinates were among the easiest dupes of a gang of clever American scoundrels who introduced a version of the American gold-brick swindle with uproarious success.

The game was played in the following manner:

One of the gang would find a likely victim in the

person of a newly-arrived speculator keen on making his pile quickly by the investment of such ready cash as he had brought with him. The legend that gold could be metaphorically, if not literally, picked up in the streets of Johannesburg died hard; and there were always at that period men to be found whose haste to get rich blinded them to common sense.

The intended victim would be carefully nursed by the prime mover in the conspiracy for a week or so. Money was spent upon him freely, and judicious hints dropped to the effect that there was "plenty more of it where that came from." Confidence having been established between the rogue and his little less scoundrelly victim, a scheme for purchasing a parcel of stolen gold would be diffidently proposed. There was a striking sameness and want of originality about all these decoy stories. The stock version was that a miner or official on a certain mine had unexpectedly come into possession of a parcel of stolen stuff, which, in the ordinary course, he would have gone off to England with. But he was not in a position to take this step at such short notice, so was prepared to sacrifice the parcel for a quarter of its value for prompt cash rather than take the risk of holding it for a better price. A party of gentlemen were putting up the necessary money, and if the dupe cared to stand in it might be arranged. His share of the contribution would be, say, £200, and the value of his share of the gold at least £500. Should the dupe bite, the other man would suggest that the £200 share be made £400, in order to keep out an objectionable member of the partnership. The smaller the crowd the larger the share and the less the risk. These were the points emphasised, and in most cases the dupe fell. These transactions were always on a strict cash basis, and were generally conducted in the silence and solitude of the veld at midnight. At an agreed spot the parties would meet, duly provided with the coined gold to exchange

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for the raw material. The supposed mine official would turn up in a Cape cart, nervous and apprehensive. The farce of examining the ingots or bricks was gone through by the light of a carefully-screened lantern, the verdict "All right!" pronounced by the chief swindler, and the dupe, who, to inspire his confidence, had been entrusted with the joint purchase money, would hand over the bag of coin to the seller of the stolen gold.

"I haven't time to count it; I'll take your word it's all right," the seller would say, and, mounting to the Cape cart, drive back to town.

In order to continue the confidence trick, the dupe would be trusted to convey the gold to his own quarters until such time as it could be transported to England. In the interval two things invariably happened. The plausible chief swindler disappeared from his customary haunts after a day or two, and the dupe's suspicions having been aroused, he would make inquiries and find that he had paid £400 for a brick of gilded lead worth at least, at Johannesburg rates, elevenpence per pound.

The gold of this standard is known as "Schlenter" on the Rand.

The trapping system, whether applied to the detection of illicit diamond dealers in Kimberley or to illicit liquor or gold dealers on the Rand, never had the public sympathy or acquiescence. A vigorous denunciation of it by the lawyer retained for the defence in a liquor or gold case never failed to score a point or two in favour of the accused. One landdrost, who held the esteem of the public, on several occasions expressed himself strongly in favour of its disuse. Therefore, when the story got out of how a prominent detective of the illicit gold buying department had been hoist with his own petard, the merriment and delight of the Randites were exuberant.

For some months the chief had been shadowing an American who was reasonably suspected of being a big

buyer of amalgam. Nominally a canteen keeper and actually a professional gambler, the frequent displays of superfluous cash to which the Yankee was addicted could not safely be attributed to illicit origin; but the chief had made up his mind that the partnership in the canteen was only the cover for illicit gold buying business, and, losing patience at the slowness of the stalking game, he proceeded to set a trap.

A confederate detective cautiously approached the suspect and gave him to understand that a customer could be found for any quantity of amalgam. It was as a possessor and seller that the chief desired to catch the Yankee, not as a buyer. There was good reason for believing that a large quantity of stolen amalgam was in the possession of the American, and the aim of the chief was to win *kudos* with the mining magnates by recovering this parcel.

The bait took. Cautiously but keenly the illicit fell in with the proposal of the decoy that the whole parcel should be turned over at one deal. Two stipulations were insisted upon. First, that the £500 in sovereigns should be brought in daylight, counted by the illicit, and sealed in a specially prepared bag. The agent was then to take the money and drive out alone to an agreed spot in the veld, where he would be met by the illicit, and in exchange for the bag of sovereigns he would receive the amalgam, said to be buried near the place of rendezvous.

The first part of the bargain was kept. The chief supplied his agent with £500 in sovereigns, and, in breach of the undertaking that the agent should keep the appointment alone, concealed himself beneath the seat of the Cape cart which conveyed the agent and the bag of sovereigns.

It was a dark and stormy night, the sort of night generally selected by romancists for the perpetration of dark deeds. The illicit was waiting, with spade and pick.

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He had so far kept his share of the compact that he had not even brought a Kaffir to do the digging, a circumstance to which he called the attention of the agent.

"We will take turns at the resurrection," he said. "I'll take the first shift," and he began to dig at a spot where the ground seemed strangely hard considering that it must have been turned up to receive the amalgam.

The illicit worked hard until he was standing in a knee-deep hole.

"It's your turn," he shouted, stepping out and advancing towards the other with the spade.

At that moment a shout came from the direction of the Cape cart containing the crouching chief.

"What's that?" asked the agent, turning towards the sound. Next moment the spade came crashing on to his neck and shoulders, and he fell unconscious. The illicit rushed to the Cape cart. The chief had been collared by two men who had risen out of the veld, and was securely handcuffed with his hands behind him. The men lifted him to the ground, led him to his unconscious subordinate, handcuffed them together, and, leaving them, the trio drove back to Johannesburg carrying the bag of sovereigns with them.

The story was round the town within twenty-four hours. The chief denied it *in toto*, so did the subordinate.

When, in the fullness of time, the chief quarrelled with the Pretorian executive, they retorted by accusing him of having misappropriated £500 under pretence of trapping a notorious illicit gold buyer.

Nobody believes that version. The chief lost that £500 fairly—if the word may be used in connection with such a foul business.

It has often been the subject of remark that very many people hold two views on the subject of robbery. One is that it is wrong and deserving of punishment to steal from a private individual, but only a venial offence to

rob a community or a company. This is particularly true in South Africa, where it has always been extremely difficult to persuade a jury to convict a man charged with any offence against corporations. Just as in Kimberley no one was thought the worse of by his fellows for having trafficked successfully in stolen diamonds, so on the Rand, when the illicit gold buying scourge was rampant, public sympathy was always with the wrongdoer and against the police.

Many a man, in other respects the soul of honour and punctilious in his dealings with individuals, would actually justify amalgam buying on the sophistical grounds that the stuff having been taken before it was in the possession of the shareholders, no wrong was done, as a man could not lose what he had not possessed. This view was once discussed in all seriousness and with considerable ability by a party of professional men in a South African club, and the "noes" were in a hopeless minority.

Some such distorted view of ethics was taken by the hero of the coming story.

He was a young doctor, but with some years' experience on the Rand, and had imbibed much of the liberal and intoxicating mental atmosphere of the place; in fact, prided himself on having adapted himself to his surroundings.

He had attended with conspicuous success a miner engaged on one of the largest East Rand mines, and earned the effusive and, as it happened, embarrassing gratitude of his patient. One day he received at his house by a Kaffir a large jam-pot, packed with old bandages and cotton-wool and smelling strongly of iodoform.

The Kaffir explained that it had been sent by the late patient, who had left the mine, and that it was a present to the doctor, who would know what to do with it.

The bottle contained nearly forty ounces of amalgam,

worth at current rates about £60. How and whence it came was easily guessed.

The doctor was more amused than shocked at the gift, the only objection to it being the difficulty of turning it into cash. He refrained from mentioning the matter to any of his friends, and decided on keeping the parcel until opportunity came for getting rid of it at something near full value.

He had, however, reckoned without his wife, a typical English girl, full of English prejudices, and not yet adapted to colonial thought and action. She could not be educated up to differentiating between robbing a rich mining company and an individual. She knew just enough of the matter to be aware that her husband was, to say the least, guilty of a very grave and dangerous indiscretion, and told him so often. His retort was: "Don't talk before the Kaffir servants." Her rejoinder was, as it was intended to be, cutting: "But your reason for preferring raw Kaffirs to Christians is that they can't overhear our conversation."

His final answer was to put the amalgam out of sight and refuse to discuss the matter. But Fate and the wife combined were a match for the firmest resolutions. That amalgam developed all the malefic influences that hang around a trinket stolen from a Chinaman's family joss. During the absence of the husband strange men loafed about the place—the house was on an old farm. Twice the police came out, ostensibly to inquire about a runaway Kaffir supposed to be in the doctor's service; but the wife was certain their real objective was the amalgam, and for long afterwards the sight of a policeman brought her severe palpitation of the heart. But all through the stress the doctor remained obdurate. He could not afford to throw away sixty pounds to oblige a neurotic wife, and would not. So he heroically bore her nagging in silence.

One morning, while reading the newspaper at breakfast, madam had something like a fit of hysterics. When she had partially recovered she withdrew her husband to the privacy of the open veranda, and dramatically pointed to a paragraph in the news sheet.

It was the report of a case of illicit gold buying. A respectable shopkeeper in Johannesburg had been sent to prison for three months for being in possession of twelve ounces of amalgam.

"You will get five years at that rate, for you have forty ounces," she argued, with feminine contempt for figures; "and I refuse to remain in the house so long as that awful stuff is here."

The storm lasted all day, till, broken down by her persistency and stung to desperation, the doctor dug the parcel from behind the bookcase, went to the edge of the dam, and threw the ball well into the centre, where it sank into the sludge of fifty years' accumulation. Then peace reigned in the home until the war came, when the doctor went to the front with an irregular corps, and did not return to the homestead for nearly three years.

The first thing he noticed was that the dam walls had been raised by deposits of black mud and the holding capacity enlarged enormously.

It was some time before he learned from the neighbours that soon after his departure for Natal, his Kaffir boy had returned, accompanied by two other natives, and announced that the baas had instructed him to deepen the dam.

The three worked industriously for more than three months, then disappeared suddenly, leaving their spades and heavy equipment.

It might be only a coincidence, but Jim, the doctor's late kitchen-boy, has long been settled down in his native kraal in Natal, with a wife bought for six oxen, and is prospering.

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"I thought raw Kaffirs could not understand the conversation they overheard," madam remarked.

"It would be a marvel if a deaf Kaffir couldn't overhear and understand when he has heard a woman preaching on the same subject for six months," was the ungenerous reply.

It is probably unique in the history of crime detection that no conviction has so far been obtained against any person for actually stealing gold or amalgam from any Rand mine. The only charges successfully established were for being in unlawful possession of raw gold. It is a question whether an original thief was ever discovered. One suggestion has been that the offenders were too highly placed to warrant action. The most probable explanation is that already given—the long operation involved in collecting a sufficiently large amount of gold to justify the risk. In diamond stealing one successful transaction might mean a competence for a year or two. A successful gold stealer must be prepared to watch, wait and prey for many weary months before landing a sizable fish.

Not every mine manager was keen on reporting gold robbery. The old-fashioned private banks in England rarely prosecuted defaulting employees lest the fact that the bank had been and was liable to be robbed might alarm customers. The same motive influenced some mine directorates, and they refrained from making public the leakage. The sudden resignation of many a mine official would cease to be matter for surprise, indeed, might never have become necessary, had the directors the courage to make an example of a "high-up" official.

The history of gold stealing on the Rand contains no case which, by reason of the large amount involved, could be called sensational. One hundred pounds' worth of amalgam was a big item to handle. There have been captures of as much as 2,000 ounces, but that represented

collections from probably every other mine on the Rand and a year's work on the part of the thieves.

It is easy to understand how amalgam was stolen in small quantities, but not lumps of fine gold that had passed through the final process. True, fine gold formed the smallest portion of the plunder of the gold thieves; but ingots of two, three and four hundred ounces have been found in the possession of the unauthorised.

During the exciting week of the Jameson Raid the Johannesburg detectives shadowed two Germans leaving Park Station by the boat train for Cape Town. The men evidently got scared, for they disappeared, leaving part of their baggage on the platform. On examination, a parcel of 300 ounces of fine gold was found wrapped round with new shirts in a whisky case. The men were not seen again, or, at any rate, no arrest followed.

Another capture under similar circumstances, the thieves bolting at sight of the detectives, revealed an ingenious method of hiding. Three large volumes—a Dutch dictionary and works on surveying—were hollowed out in the centre, a square hole six inches long, four wide and three deep forming a receptacle for over a thousand pounds' worth of fine gold and amalgam.

There are on record several stories of finds of concealed amalgam by unsuspecting persons. A West Rand blacksmith purchased from one of the mines a quantity of scrap iron that had been lying in a heap for several years. In an old oil drum he found 800 ounces of amalgam.

A few days later he received a visit from a stranger, who coolly demanded delivery of the parcel, threatening that unless the request were complied with he would give information to the police. The finder yielded and surrendered the lot. That was his story. It was regarded as significant that some months after the blacksmith should pay out his partner and start in a more pretentious style at the other end of the reef. He also made

extensive purchases of scrap from every mine that was prepared to sell.

It was for a long time the custom of the Netherlands Railway Company to sell off by public auction on the market square at Johannesburg all unclaimed luggage. The boxes, bags and parcels were declared by the auctioneer to be offered unexamined as to their contents. These sales always attracted a large crowd of bidders and onlookers, the speculative character of the business appealing strongly to the gambling instinct of the average Johannesburger. The highest bidder was expected to open his parcel on the spot and gratify the curiosity of the assembly. More often than not the purchaser found that he had paid good money for rubbish, but now and then the bidding received a strong stimulus by the good fortune of a lucky purchaser. The record case was that of a miner who acquired for ten shillings a disreputable-looking portmanteau, and was rewarded by finding a theodolite, level, and a complete mining engineer's equipment worth over £100.

Among the lots once disposed of at one of these "lucky-bag" sales was what looked like a costumier's delivery box. The purchaser was a Johannesburg boarding-house keeper, and the price paid a few shillings. It was remarked that the lady showed some reluctance to obey the unwritten law by examining her purchase in the presence of the assembly, and it was not till she had been severely chaffed that she yielded. The crowd laughed unsympathetically when she gingerly turned over some not too cleanly linen, a battered piece of millinery, and a few similar articles that would have been rejected by a second-hand clothes dealer.

A week or so later a rumour went round that the purchaser of the rubbish had sold her business for a trifling sum and departed for Europe. The story went that the lady had a shrewd suspicion that this parcel con-

tained something more valuable than cast-off female apparel. It had belonged to a former lodger, the wife of a man who had twice been arrested, but released without prosecution, on suspicion of complicity in illicit gold buying. The couple had disappeared about nine months before, after having had their belongings overhauled by the detectives of the illicit gold buying department.

What the milliner's box contained can only be guessed, but the ex-boarding-house keeper, who had never showed signs of approaching retirement with a competency, when last seen in England was staying at a fashionable hydropathic establishment, and living up to her character as a wealthy widow whose husband had made money as a Rand speculator.

Small parcels of amalgam have occasionally been discovered by hotel keepers in the luggage of guests who had departed without observing a custom usual at hotels. The proprietor of the Grand National Hotel once handed to the police over one hundred ounces which came into his possession in this way.

The difficulty of finding a reliable purchaser for stolen gold was undoubtedly responsible for many parcels being left on the hands of the thief or *pro tem.* possessor, and being discovered or "mislaid" before they could be disposed of.

Some months after the British had been in occupation of Krugersdorp, during the late Boer War, an ex-Boer official went to the military authorities and offered to give information as to the whereabouts of a quantity of stolen amalgam. Having made satisfactory terms, which included exemption for himself from any responsibility, he led the way to a well in the yard of a private house and showed a ledge a few feet down on which rested a parcel. When brought to the surface, it proved to be over £2,000 worth of fine gold and amalgam. The explanation was simple. Those who hide can generally find. But

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under the new regime the finding was likely to be fraught with serious consequences, and conscience sometimes makes cowards of the boldest.

Except for the comparatively brief period when Dr. Fritz Krause held sway as public prosecutor of Johannesburg, the illicit gold buying department of the detective force cannot be said to have proved a success. It is true that a few convictions were obtained, and a certain amount of stolen gold recovered—in fact, a very large amount; but as there was no means of deciding from what mine it had been abstracted, the gold so recovered went to swell the plethoric State Treasury chest. As to the few receivers sent to jail, it was felt by the chiefs of the mining industry that these few samples were exceedingly poor. As in the case of the illicit liquor trade, the big sinners always managed to wriggle through the meshes of the legal net on the few occasions on which they were entangled. Very few people had full confidence in the good faith of those whose duty it was to detect and suppress the traffic. As a matter of fact, it was openly stated again and again that the actual receivers were the police themselves, and that the illicit gold buying law was beneficial to them alone, since it rendered the disposal of stolen gold so difficult that purchasers were scared off, and left the market to the police.

This popular view of the complicity of the officials was partially borne out by the frequent changes in the detective department. In one month there were three changes in the office of the chief of the department, while the number of members of the rank and file who emerged from the obscurity of the force to the prominence of substantial burghers was, to say the least, noteworthy.

Perhaps the most significant commentary upon the failure of the illicit gold buying department to justify its existence was supplied by the attitude of the industry in whose interests the machinery was established. In the

earlier period the discussions at the Chamber of Mines and the reports contained approving references to the work of the department; but rapidly came a diminuendo vanishing into silence. It seemed as if the mining magnates had dropped the matter and relegated it to the limbo of failures best forgotten.

The law is still operative, but prosecutions occur so rarely that a new-comer might easily be ignorant of the existence of such an offence as illicit gold buying.

CHAPTER VIII

NATIVE-LABOUR AGENTS

The Relationship of White and Black—Kaffirs Born to the Means of Livelihood—Conditions which Drive Some to Work—Magato on the Subject of Labour—Recruiting Native Labour—Coming of the Labour Agent—"Blackbirding"—Attempts to Stop the Illicit Agent—Unexpected Action on the part of the Police

AT first sight the connection between the recruiting of native labour for the Rand mines and secret service may not be obvious. As this chapter grows the reader will become aware of the fact that not only is the business essentially secret service, but that if it were not the British public would long since have been shocked and surprised by the existence of conditions that were supposed to have ceased to exist when the last Blackbirders of the Southern Seas were brought to account.

Among the many points on which the general public hold erroneous and misinformed notions in regard to South African matters is that of the relationship of white and black. They cannot grasp the vital fact that, despite the existence of a teeming native population, only a very small percentage of the males will, or need, work. The public do not know that owing to the communal system under which the Kaffir lives—his access to free land and the surprising fewness of his material wants—the necessity for earning money only exists when forced upon him by artificial needs. The Kaffir is born to the means of livelihood. He is born to a father who, by the law of natural increase, possesses growing wealth in the form of cattle. He has no rent to pay, the labour essential for the cultivation of the mealie patch and the herding of the cattle is

supplied by wife, or wives, and children, and as each daughter becomes marriageable—as she does at fifteen or sixteen years of age, and even earlier—she brings as the price paid by her husband six, eight or ten oxen to swell the ever-increasing herd. The son shares in the prosperity of the father, and loafs round the kraal doing his share of cattle herding, the only work a male native does not leave to the women. In the fullness of time he takes a wife, purchased for him by his father, who in addition probably starts the young couple housekeeping with all or part of the cattle brought by the wife; and so the eternal round proceeds through the generations.

The conditions which drive a young man to work are comparatively few and accidental. Drought and cattle disease may wipe off the stock; a fine imposed by the magistrate or judge for participation in a tribal fight may prove too much for the family treasury; or, strongest lure of all, the young man may have been inoculated with the wander virus, and be inspired by the stories of returned natives to see the wonders of the white man and participate in the sensuous delights pictured by those who have revelled in the debasing freedom of a liquor-laden mine compound. As the skirl of the bagpipes or the beat of the drum have lured many a British villager to the recruiting sergeant, so the sound of a concertina squeezed by a returned mine or kitchen boy has filled his brothers with a yearning to possess a similar treasure, and the only road to such happiness is that to the town.

The percentage of able-bodied Kaffirs who have never left the kraal to work for whites is surprisingly large. There are kraals within a hundred, even fifty, miles of a mining camp that have never contributed a pair of hands to the labour market. Ten per cent. in some districts is large; twenty per cent. would suggest the decay and desolation of the tribe.

The Kaffir starts life at the point most white men only

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attain with old age. Independence and a competency are his natural heritage; therefore, why should he toil?

Magato, the most philosophical of native chiefs, summed up the position to the missionary who was vainly endeavouring to inculcate the European theory of the necessity and dignity of labour.

"Why do you white men work so hard?" he inquired.

"To earn money."

"Why do you want money?"

"That we may have no need to work."

"That is a roundabout way of getting to the spot that my young men are already upon."

Another gem of Magato's philosophy was this:

"You say work is a good thing, and that all good white men enjoy work. Why is it that when you send bad men to prison you make them work as a punishment?"

Since the first battery started crushing on the Rand shortage of native labour has been chronic. Never has the supply caught up with the demand. New mines are ever in course of expansion, needing the muscle of an army of natives ranging from five hundred to as many thousands. Many mines to-day employ the larger number, and the cry for more grows louder. The wastage is enormous, and above all it is rarely that a native will contract for more than twelve months' service, for he hates underground work, and would much rather accept a pound a month as kitchen-boy on a farm or in town than double the amount on the mines—until he acquires a taste for liquor. Every month a stream of time-expired boys leave the Rand; the returning flow is neither so regular nor rapid.

Very early in the chapter a new industry arose in the land—that of recruiting native labour. The mining managers hailed the labour agents with delight, and paid premiums ranging from ten shillings to sixty shillings per caput.

The first agents were, as a rule, without reproach. They took up the work on the strength of their knowledge of certain native districts and their influence with people and chiefs. It may be that they now and then overstated the advantages of service on the mines, and offered terms which were repudiated by the compound manager on the arrival of the batch; but, on the whole, they conducted their business cleanly, and in many cases made handsome profits in a short period. The system suited the mining people, and the natives, too, were satisfied, and for a year or so the balance of supply and demand was nearly equal.

For about two years the system had worked well, when reaction began to show itself. The harvest had been sampled. Thousands of natives had returned to their kraals carrying the awful contamination of the vices acquired by contact with civilisation—a taste for something more potent than the harmless Kaffir beer, broken constitutions, and the disease that visits the sins of the fathers upon the third and fourth generations. Many a chief forbade his young men to go to the mines; the missionaries had their eyes opened to the existence of evils which, in their arcadian simplicity, they had never guessed, and more than one Natal magistrate used his influence to deter natives from going Randwards. To the credit of the Natal Government, a regulation was enacted forbidding recruiting for labour in the Colony. Nominally, the excuse put forward was that the drain on the native labour supply was prejudicial to the interests of their own farmers, but underlying it was a genuine desire to shield the Natal Kaffir from the consequences of the debauchery inseparable from life in the compounds. In time there came a serious slump in the labour market. The home supply was diminishing, the demand increasing with the striding advance of the Rand.

Then came in the Blackbirding fraudulent labour

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agent, whose motto was : "Get boys, honestly if you can ; but get them."

They were a motley crew, often the scum of the bar loafers of Reef and Dorp, whose sole qualification was ability to patter a little of the language of the tribe to be exploited. They were without the necessary capital for the expedition and too bankrupt in character to have any prospect of getting an advance from a mining company, as a reputable agent could in the past. The terms insisted on by the mine managers were cash on delivery.

Many were the expedients resorted to by these agents to get to the scene of operations. More than one tramped a hundred or more miles, living the life of a Kaffir *en route*. One resolute pair travelled beneath the tarpaulin of a coal truck as stowaways to Barberton, 180 miles, with a capital of thirty shillings, and returned to the Rand in a month, bringing a batch of 250 boys, for whom they received a premium of £2 a head. The natives did the whole journey afoot and supplied their own food.

Naturally, each batch successfully landed left the ground more bare, and succeeding agents had to exercise increasing ingenuity to induce the natives to enlist. Each man had his pet plan. Outrageous promises of huge pay and easy service were the stock bait ; but if the agent possessed the gift of tongues he exercised it in picturing the sensual delights of the paradise of the Rand, and he rarely enthused in vain.

Another method was to palm-oil the chief, either by supplying him with liquor or, if the cash were available, as it generally was after one successful foray, offering him five shillings a head for every boy he would order out. The power of the chief to do this was not so much legal as moral. His old patriarchal authority is still respected by his people in the more remote districts, and his word is law.

At length the scandals became matter of public knowledge, and the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines took steps to place recruiting under some responsible control. With that object they organised a native labour bureau, and placed at its head William Grant, as efficient and generally well qualified a person as the country could produce. He had had a long experience of the natives and was favourably known to most of the chiefs. In the days prior to the Zulu War he had been partner with John Dunn, whom the British Government made Native Commissioner of Zululand on the deposition of Cetewayo.

Grant journeyed into the districts whence the natives were mainly recruited, and explained the position to the chiefs, arranging for a supply of labour on reasonable terms, and giving personal guarantees for the fulfilment of obligations.

As soon as the illicit labour agents found their business threatened they formed a ring, and proceeded to nullify the reforming effects of Grant's scheme. Many of these men were quite as able and influential as Grant, and, being utterly unscrupulous, did not hesitate to resort to any trick or wilful misrepresentation that would prejudice the new order. They began by warning the natives against the accredited agents, using a very potent argument. The new agents offered terms, naturally, considerably below those of the illicit—the actual market rates of pay. "You know," said the gang, "you never get quite as much as even we offer you, because the mine people know that when you get into their country you cannot easily get back. If, therefore, the mine people are going to give you less than these new people offer, you will get very little."

It happened that one of Grant's agents bore the name of a Boer who had earned some local ill-repute for his bad treatment of natives. He was no connection of the unpopular member of the clan, but when the illicit

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represented him as "his son, only worse," the word was passed round, and that agent found his pleadings vain.

So effectively did the gang carry on their campaign of calumny that in many districts they completely froze the Grant men out, and for months the supply of natives was less than before the formation of the Chamber of Mines Labour Department.

This was what the illicit had hoped and played for. It drove the managers into their arms. A resolution had been passed by the Chamber of Mines pledging all mine managers to have no dealings with the illicit, but the shortage of labour became too serious to permit of nice distinctions. Boys were boys, no matter how procured, and recruits were greedily taken on and extravagant premiums paid to any person bringing a consignment of black labour.

Meanwhile the presence on the recruiting ground of rival agents, each warning the natives against the other, had its natural effect in a general paralysis of the business. Natal was closed by the Government, the natives in the Transvaal were scared off, and those beyond the Limpopo preferred the diamond fields to the gold mines, when they did decide to taste civilisation. There remained the Portuguese territories of East Africa, which so far was virgin soil. There were, however, two drawbacks to widespread recruiting by the illicit. First, there was the language difficulty; then, the Portuguese officials. It required a long apprenticeship to learn the way through the devious paths of officialdom, legitimate and otherwise. It was one thing to collect a batch of natives, another to get them out of the country. Every gate was barred with gold and opened only to a golden key. The Captain mentioned in the chapter on gun-running informed the writer, and as far as possible corroborated his statement by the production of documentary evidence, that it cost

him on one journey over two pounds a head in fees and blackmail, and in the end he was stopped for omitting to recognise some new regulation, and the gang of boys that had cost him so much to collect was dispersed.

Despite these difficulties the illicit contrived to make the business pay by resorting to any and every unscrupulous trick that ingenuity inspired by greed could devise.

Natal was closed to the open, systematic recruiting agent, but there was no means of preventing a native from going to the Transvaal on his own account. All that was needed was a travelling pass and, in a few cases, a railway ticket to the Transvaal border; also, some unusual means of coercing the victim.

This was found, also men prepared to assist in the infamous business.

In every native district there are stores kept by whites, who do a large and profitable business by supplying the natives with their few but frequent requirements. In very many instances the store-keeper is implicitly trusted by the natives of his district. He is at once banker, business agent, creditor and general adviser, and more often than not fully deserves the trust placed in him. But there are exceptions, and it was the business of the illicit labour agents to discover them and enlist their services.

There would be few such who had not among his clients many debtors, from the chief downwards. Nothing was easier than suddenly to demand payment of a long outstanding account at a time when compliance was impossible. The answer to appeals for consideration was: "The money must be paid, or I take your best cow. If you want to keep her, you must go to work at the mines and earn money. I can arrange to send you."

Sometimes higher game was flown at. A petty chief whose account had been allowed to grow to unwieldy

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proportions would be dunned inexorably. His method of escape was to order out a number of his young men to join the party being made up by an illicit agent through the store-keeper, who in many cases became the partner of the agent, if he could trust him, and advanced the necessary cash to procure travelling passes and railway tickets, if that luxury were permitted by the amount of the premium. Usually the boys were taken by rail to a point near the Transvaal border, the remainder of the 180 miles to the Rand being accomplished on foot.

Once safely over the border, the agent, who so far had kept unostentatiously in the background, boldly took charge of his batch. He was now absolute master of the situation. No boy could retreat, for the pass conditions were much more strictly insisted upon in the Transvaal than in Natal. It was not only the right but the duty of every burgher who met a stray native to demand to see his pass. Failing production of it, he could either take the boy before the nearest landdrost, or, what was more probable that he would do, give the boy the alternative of working for him until he had cleared the cost of the pass. There were numerous Transvaal Boers who made a practice of waylaying passless Kaffirs and securing their services on these conditions, the menace held over the victim being the jail and lashes for being without a pass. It was the cheapest form of labour obtainable.

On arriving at the mine the native invariably found that the pay promised by the agent was not forthcoming. He had full right of protest and refusal to sign on; but whither could he go? He was a passless vagrant, and the door of the jail opens inwards on well-oiled hinges. He had no alternative but to accept the terms. It is true he suffered no hardship, only bitter disappointment. The rate of pay on the Rand mines is the highest a Kaffir can obtain anywhere.

While the disorganisation of the native labour supply

service was at its height and the demand for boys clamorous, the opportunity of the white scoundrel came, and he seized it.

Illicit agents, who had closed native districts to further exploitation by their rascality, invented a new and lucrative variation on the business. In 1895 reports came in of the wholesale robbery of mine boys returning to their kraals carrying the fruits of their six, nine, and even twenty months' labour. They would enter a dorp on the line of the homeward march, and complain of having been stopped by white men, who announced themselves as police detectives, and demanded the money being carried on the pretence that it had been stolen.

Occasionally the boys would refuse and show fight, but the natural fear of white authority, and recollection of police domination on the mines, usually had the effect of aweing the victims into sullen acquiescence, and the footpads had an easy task.

Native grievances did not find a ready hearing on the Rand, and it required several atrociously outrageous cases to provoke public and official interest. It is safe to say that many thousands of sovereigns were taken from natives under these conditions within a year. So indifferent was public sentiment in the matter that men have boasted in canteens that the gold they were displaying and squandering so ostentatiously had been acquired by "sticking up Kaffirs."

At length came a case which even the most anti-negrophilist of Randites was bound to admit was "really too bad."

Three natives, returning home with about £150 between them, representing four years' continuous and exemplary servitude in the mines, were "stuck up" near Heidelberg by two notorious Rand hooligans. Having been warned while in Johannesburg that bogus policemen were in the habit of waylaying natives, the boys refused

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to part with their treasure when stopped, and resisted as well as they could with the sticks they carried. At the point of a revolver the highwaymen disarmed the three, cut away the belts and bandages which formed the natives' purses, then brutally kicked all three on the most sensitive parts of their persons as a punishment for "resisting the police." One boy died on the spot; the other two were rendered contorted cripples, both dying within a year, after spending their days and nights in agony, objects hideous and pitiful to look upon.

The thieves were never discovered; but the incident stirred the authorities in Johannesburg. The Chamber of Mines brought pressure to bear upon the Government, and, with the assistance of Dr. Fritz Krause, Public Prosecutor, a system of partial police protection for returning mine boys was organised. But the enormous tract of country over which returning natives passed rendered complete convoy impracticable. Certain parts of the journey were rendered safe; but all that happened was that the highwaymen became more circumspect in selecting their point of attack. Robberies continued, growing more brutal for the reason that the forewarned victims generally made some show of resistance.

After much fruitless police work, two of the scoundrels long wanted for successful raids were caught and convicted. To the surprise of the majority, they were sentenced to a long term of imprisonment and fifteen lashes. They were the first white men flogged in the Transvaal for years, and the effect was salutary. A detailed story of their flogging went round the country. It described their howls and shrieks for mercy under the lash as the most awful and nerve-shattering the officials had ever heard during years of "cat" wielding.

The advocates of the lash for crimes of violence have a strong argument in this case. The "sticking up" of Kaffirs became one of the rarest of offences, and the

hooligan type of rascal retired from the business completely. The successors were generally civilised Kaffirs, who posed as native detectives, but their depredations were few and far between, for a native is more easily identified by a native than a white man. The result was that after a few score lashes had left their marks, the native highwayman followed his white exemplar into retirement.

CHAPTER IX

FUGITIVES AND RECLUSES

The Transvaal a Fugitives' Sanctuary—"Mr. Burton," *alias* — ?—One-armed Mac—The Retreat in Magato's Country—Boer or British *Agents-Provocateurs*—The Real Object of Native Wars—Who Supplied the Magatese with Arms?—The Solitary Life and Madness—The Clue of the Kipperd Herring—John Nicholson Neil—Blackmailing Fugitives—The Capture of Tarbeau—The Long Arm of the Czar—White Kaffirs

AN observant sojourner in the remote spots of the Transvaal a few years since often had his curiosity temporarily aroused by meeting an Englishman who somehow seemed out of harmony with his environment. He felt instinctively that the man was a misfit, that he was there not by choice, and had a story to tell, which something impelled the stranger to refrain from seeking to hear, much as he would wish to have done so.

Sometimes the man was the keeper of a native store on a spot obviously ill-selected, and unprofitable owing to its distance from native kraals or beaten tracks. Now and then prospecting for gold or other minerals was the professed business of the solitary one, and occasionally he lived a Robinson Crusoe existence on the products of the soil alone.

But, whatever his occupation, he invariably possessed certain marked characteristics—the external manners and appearance of the town-reared, an uncolonial refinement, and a strongly marked disinclination to court the society of such white neighbours or casual callers as he might have.

If the visitor stayed long enough to have opportunity

for closer observation of his host, and knew colonial character, he would notice a singular reticence on the part of the man to talk about himself—sure and certain sign of either good breeding or purposeful restraint—both rare colonial attributes. If the traveller had heard of the man from a neighbour *en route*, it is more than probable that the criticism was unfriendly; that he was described as an unsociable, unneighbourly creature, who resented all proffered friendship and seemed actuated by one desire only—to be left alone.

When the Transvaal became a British Colony several of these recluses disappeared abruptly, or left under circumstances that entailed a forced sale of their stock and possessions at great and inexplicably unnecessary sacrifice. In the few cases in which the departed left an address, it proved to be a false one, and the neighbours whispered, "Afraid of extradition! I guessed it all along." This would seem to be a true and reasonable explanation; in three cases we know it to be so. Up till the final British occupation the Transvaal offered the best and most accessible asylum to the fugitive from British justice. There was no extradition agreement with England; residence in the country did not necessitate acquaintance with any other language than English; the sudden arrival of a stranger was not a matter to provoke dangerous curiosity and meddling inquiry; and, given the possession of sufficient cash to reach the spot and establish a hut, a reasonably resourceful man could make a living, which, if not luxurious, was certainly tolerable, and, with staying power and average luck, might become actually enviable. It is an open secret that several men who entered the country under the suggested circumstances acquired more than a competence, and kept clear of the arresting, long-reaching arm of the law.

In 1897 the present writer was a member of a hunting party consisting of Government officials, all of them but

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himself experienced sportsmen and skilled shots. According to the very sensible rules by which such parties were governed, each member was assigned his place and duty, the big-game shot having prescriptive monopoly of shooting his pet quarry, the feather shot his, so that all overlapping and possibility of dispute were avoided. Finding himself outclassed in his particular line, the writer abandoned the gun, with which he was not too much at home, for the prospector's pick and handbook, and practised the most fascinatingly uncertain of solitary occupations. The scene was the Haarnetsberg District of the Northern Transvaal, a proved auriferous region, and calculated to repay even amateur exploration. On the third day out the following up of likely indications became so absorbing that time and direction were lost count of till hunger and approaching sunset called a halt and brought that most startling and disconcerting of thrills, the realisation of being lost.

The horrors of a cold, moonless night in a precipitous region were accentuated by the Tantalus torture of possessing a well-filled tobacco pouch—best proxy for food—but only three matches. The successful effort to keep the pipe going by reloading before the fire had died helped vastly to keep the mind occupied and the eyes open during the longest night of a long experience of the night watches.

With sunrise came relief. A huge and menacing boarhound proved the vanguard of a man with a gun, in quest of guineafowl. An hour later the wanderer was being hospitably entertained in an elaborately, even luxuriously, fitted and equipped hut of Kaffir build but European finish.

The host was clearly a man of breeding and refinement, and, despite his rough, ready-made, slop clothes, bore the outward and visible sign of the aristocrat. He gracefully fenced several comments and side questions in-

tended to discover his identity, and took advantage of the discovery of mutual literary and musical tastes to divert attention from his personality. He proved a delightful companion, and as much out of place in his surroundings as a West-End exquisite in an East-End four-ale bar. He explained inferentially that he had adopted the life of a recluse to study the flora, fauna and natives of the country; that, finding the few neighbouring farmers and miners intellectually uncongenial, he held himself strictly aloof; that he rarely visited the neighbouring townlet of Pietersberg, being quite happy and content with his many occupations, which comprised mechanics, gardening, shooting, prospecting for rocks rather than ore, playing the violin, and revelling in a fair library, regularly added to with the newest and best books and reviews of England, France and Germany. He also added that the writer was the second white man who had entered his home in eight years.

Later inquiry in the district showed that Mr. Burton had been on the spot about nine years, and was rarely seen except once every three months, when he went to the nearest store and post office, received a batch of letters and books, and apparently a parcel of notes of the Standard Bank of South Africa, for he always changed some at the store in settlement of his account. He would then make purchases, load up a couple of Kaffirs and a pack-mule, and return to his retreat for another quarter of a year, having exchanged no superfluous words with any person in the dorp.

The year of the outbreak of the last Boer War Mr. Burton left for Cape Town, after giving instructions to a local auctioneer to sell off the homestead and its varied contents, and remit the proceeds by cheque to the Standard Bank, Cape Town.

Mr. Burton has not been seen in South Africa since, but the photograph of an aristocratic person involved

some years ago in a West-End scandal has been shown to the writer and several persons in the Pietersberg district, and recognised as bearing a marvellous resemblance to Mr. Burton.

It may be mentioned that the aristocratic person involved in the unsavoury case was reported to have died in Eastern Europe some months after he disappeared from England.

Towards the end of 1895 an unusually sensational murder case startled Johannesburg. Despite the bad reputation of the Golden City, it is a matter of record that no cosmopolitan mining camp of its size ever had a smaller criminal roll. The criminals were there, but they were largely unemployed, and they formed a standing argument in support of the humanitarians who insist that crime is the outcome of poverty rather than of perverse disposition. So long as things were booming, crimes having sordid robbery as their provoking cause were not conspicuously in excess of the average in European cities; but with the slump came an abnormal increase in crimes of robbery with violence. The case in point, however, was not of this class.

A ruffian of the Australian larrikin type, named Mac-laghan, had given the Johannesburg police and canteen-keepers much trouble by his drunken rowdyism. One night, in a canteen brawl, he was seized by the police, but got away. In the pursuit he fired a revolver, killing a white man and an Indian coolie.

From the moment he disappeared round a dark corner he was lost sight of. Mr. Andrew Trimble, whose adventures during and after the Jameson Raid would make an unbelievable sensational drama, had just been appointed chief of the Johannesburg police. This was his first big case, and he put all his unquestionable knowledge and ability into it. Mac-laghan was a one-armed man, the lost limb being represented by an iron hook, a fact which

should have rendered him an easily recognised object under any circumstances. Yet he simply and completely vanished. The public took special interest in the case for two reasons—the dashing desperadoism of the fugitive, and the fixed belief that he was in hiding near the police-station.

Trimble acted upon this assumption; but although the slums of the Golden City had a thorough overhauling, Maclaghan was not found, and gradually the interest in One-armed Mac cooled down—in fact, much sooner than is the case in most sensations, probably for the very good reason that not once did the papers report that the wanted one had been seen here or there; and fifteen years elapsed before Maclaghan was apprehended and made to pay the price of his misdeeds. After having been concerned in some shady work in South Africa, as shown in the ensuing narrative of native troubles, he fled the country; but in 1910 was recognised in Australia, taken to Johannesburg, and duly convicted of and hanged for the double murder he had so heartlessly committed.

It fell to the lot of one of the authors to cross, unwittingly, the trail of this fugitive from justice; and although the clues were few, and one, at least, was at the time all unheeded, they were very conclusive.

A few months after Maclaghan's disappearance vague rumours reached the Rand of the doings of certain white men, said to be residing in the native regions of the Northern Transvaal. They were variously described as *agents-provocateurs* of the Transvaal Government, working to justify a general wiping out of the natives of that region; or agents of the British who subsequently developed into the Reformers; and their object was to assist in preparing the natives to join in that great Armageddon which was to end the Kruger dynasty.

One of the authors undertook an investigation into

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the facts underlying these rumours, and he journeyed to the region occupied by the independent tribe who owned Magato as chief.

This trip afforded an interesting example of the perplexing efficiency of the Kaffir intelligence organisation, whatever that may be. For obvious reasons the mission was conducted with as much secrecy as was compatible with not provoking curiosity, yet from the day he left Pretoria until he reached the hofstaad of Magato—nearly a fortnight, for speed was no object—his doings were known to the chief as completely as if he had been supplied with the traveller's diary. Although at that period known to few persons outside Johannesburg and Pretoria, and travelling under an alias, the agent was accosted in his own name several times between Pietersburg and his destination. The first store-keeper met in Magato's country—an absolute stranger—opened the conversation at the door with a jocular, "Which of your names shall I call you by?"

At another store the keeper was undisguisedly hostile, so much so that under the influence of whisky he volunteered almost all the information needed, defiantly declaring his readiness to join the natives in any attempt to clear out the Boers. He insinuated that when the fight began there would be a big surprise in store for those who harboured the delusion that the natives were helpless or unfit to cope with white men. He did not say so, but he left a distinct impression that Magato's people possessed the very best of firearms, and were only waiting their own time and convenience to give Mr. Kruger a chance to "come on."

As a friend and sympathiser, this store-keeper would have been a danger to any cause. He was chronically intoxicated, an incurable braggart, and altogether an undesirable.

We had decided to pay no attention to his meander-

ings when something occurred to invest them with an interest and value they did not carry unsupported.

A ruffianly-looking white man, wrapped in a huge skin rug or kaross, bare-footed, dirty-faced, and having the appearance of a man just awakened from a drunken sleep, slouched into the room, and without any introduction or preamble began :

"Don't you pay any attention to what he's saying. He's drunk."

He proceeded to abuse the store-keeper half seriously, half jocularly, advising him to shut up and go to bed, sandwiching his advice and invective with reiterated assurances that "Jim didn't know what he was talking about."

It was clearly a case of "Methinks he doth protest too much." The anxiety to qualify and depreciate Jim's outpourings was so obviously earnest and cumbersome that it excited the suspicion it was intended to allay. Two more tactless bunglers it would be difficult to conceive.

Irritated by the mentorship of his chum, Jim's latent drunken rage blazed fiercely, and after several futile efforts to throw bottles and glasses he was dragged away by the man in the kaross to the bedroom adjacent, whence sounds of a struggle came, lasting several minutes. Amid the torrent of blasphemy that flowed from one to the other, the voice of the store-keeper now and then rose angry and terror-stricken, "Keep that damned thing off me!"

The interpretation of that phrase was not to be discovered for some years; and before coming to the end of One-armed Mac's sojourn in South Africa it is necessary to introduce yet another masterless man, and to allude in some detail to the relations that at that period existed between Boer and native.

In addition to the Captain mentioned in the chapter on gun-running, there was supposed to be in the region another picturesque adventurer, the "Admiral," of whom

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strange things were said when he was absent from his haunts in Johannesburg, but never hinted at when he was within reach. Like the Captain, but with more genuine authority, he claimed to have served the Queen with distinction, and everything in his conduct, public and private, supported the theory that he was a brave soldier of fortune, with a record only tarnished by a mad marriage. He was a violent hater of everything appertaining to Krugerism; in fact, a monomaniac—one of those too zealous partisans whose championship would prejudice any cause—but seemingly sincere; and, what was more, a born leader of men. He possessed that strange personal magnetism which inspired confidence at sight, and as he never proposed a scheme of audacity in which he was not prepared to take the lead, and to accept fullest responsibility, he could always command a following. Nothing, therefore, sounded more probable than the rumour that the Admiral was acting as military adviser to Magato, and preparing him for a struggle with the Boers. What the Magatese would gain by it, if successful, was not very apparent, for at that time they enjoyed a degree of independence probably never known to a nominally subject race.

And hereby hangs a very unpleasant suggestion which Britishers would like to have cleared away. If these Englishmen were really acting as *agents-provocateurs*, and encouraging the native chiefs with an idea that they could beat the Boers, they must have known the whole thing was futile, and that they were going the best and shortest way to ensure the ultimate wiping out of the tribes. At that very moment Malaboch, a petty chief, and another chief of a tribe in the Woodbush District were life-prisoners in Pretoria jail, as the result of an unsuccessful campaign against the Boers. The fate of Magato would have been that of his son and successor, had he lived to act upon the counsel of these white

advisers. One is driven to the disagreeable conclusion that these agents were acting on behalf of the Boer Government, unless—as might have been the case with the Admiral—they had some mad-brained notion that a native war would hurt the Kruger regime.

Dr. Scoble, no mean, if biased, authority, in his "Rise and Fall of Krugerism," does not hesitate to say that the Woodbush and Malaboch campaigns were purposely provoked by the Pretorian Executive by way of giving the young burghers shooting practice in preparation for the coming struggle with England. Many people believed that; but there is one very serious flaw in the otherwise plausible argument.

In the Malaboch campaign (1894) the Boer Government, for the first time in its history, commandeered British subjects, and took them by force to fight natives. It is notorious that the bulk of the fighters in that commando were Britishers, who, for the most part, went under protest. If, then, the object of the war was really to train the young burghers to the use of arms, one would hardly have thought that the powers that were would have given their natural enemies, the British, equal practice and facilities for acquiring skill in this way; so this view of the matter is scarcely tenable. The object of the campaigns—which were unquestionably provoked by, or on behalf of, the Boers—was not fighting practice, but territorial expansion. True, the country occupied by the natives belonged to the Transvaal, but it was not, nor was it likely to be in the ordinary course, of any use to the burghers if the location principle was to be maintained. A successful native war meant reducing the population and compelling the men, by despoiling them of their cattle, to leave the location in search of work. By throwing many thousands of Kaffirs on to the labour market the Boers would again be in a position to obtain cheap servants, which they had not been able to do since

the abnormal demand of the Rand had sent up the price.

It was after the capture of 'Mpfeu and the defeat of the Magatese that we next cross the trail of One-armed Mac. How far the other two chiefs were tempted and provoked into providing a *casus belli* we do not pretend to know; but that 'Mpfeu, the son and successor of Magato, was the victim of white conspirators we have no manner of doubt. One thing is distinctly suggestive, and hints at an excellent Boer intelligence department. Within an hour of the capture of 'Mpfeu's deserted hofstaad, parties of burghers, from whom British volunteers were rigorously excluded, went straight away to make thorough search in places which, in the ordinary course, no man who knows Kaffir ways would have thought worth wasting time on. What was the object of the quest undertaken with such unwonted promptitude? The reputed Magato diamonds, perhaps; hidden arms, more probably, for about a hundred rifles were brought into laager and shown as justification for the expedition.

Every one bore the Transvaal Government mark!

When that fact was pointed out by an Englishman, a commandant ordered the lot to be concealed in cut grass, placed on one of the wagons, and closely wrapped in the wagon buck-sail. Further, a guard was placed over the wagon, nominally to protect one case of beer, put there to prevent the wind flapping the canvas covering the rifles.

And the point and moral of this otherwise trifling incident?

The white men who had been for many months living in the country, and presumably stirring up the drunken, dissipated young chief to fight, were loud-voiced professors of red-hot imperialism—in public. Was this a disguise of their real character as members of the Transvaal Secret Service?

And what became of them? They left their footprints very clearly impressed.

A well-built Kaffir hut, adapted to the accommodation of a white man of some taste, was found deserted. Letters and papers had been burned; their ashes stuck to the grass walls, and fell like black snowflakes when the breeze was admitted. Among the items which had escaped the flames were a photograph of a Johannesburg barmaid who was a great admirer of the Admiral, and a portrait of Sir H. Beerbohm Tree, cut from a London illustrated paper. That gentleman was the favourite actor of the Admiral.

Later, one of the deserted wives of the fugitive 'Mpfu began to answer questions put to her through an obviously incompetent native interpreter of Zulu origin. Woman-like, she answered most freely questions which were not put, but might have been, and her evidence was more valuable because of her unsought additions and after-thoughts than for her direct answers to direct questions.

Two white men had occupied the hut, she said; one—here she described the Admiral with a fullness of detail which left no doubt. The other was a man who was always drunk, and had an iron hook where his hand should be! He used it to fight with, and many natives bore the marks of it on their faces and bodies.

This was the "damned thing" the store-keeper exhorted the man in the kaross to "keep off me."

Some months after the Magato campaign the writer, who had written on the business, received at Krugersdorp an anonymous letter that had been posted at Delagoa Bay. It ran:

"Have read your lies. You deserve a bullet on sight and will get it.—THE ADMIRAL."

The writing was in imitation printed characters, and provided no traces of the authorship. These came later,

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after the publication of another article on the Magato campaign. The characters were as before, in large imitation print :

"If you are fool enough not to be warned don't be surprised at the consequences."

Then, in ordinary script, came the damning proof of authorship in a line in the undoubted hand of the Admiral, quoting a phrase that was familiar to both, but extremely unlikely to be known to a stranger.

This letter had been posted at Pietersburg, the jumping-off place for Magato's country.

There is presumptive evidence that the Admiral prefers to remain, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." He was next heir to a Scottish baronetcy. The holder of the title, at the period we are writing of, has been dead several years, and is succeeded by a distant relative.

Were it not for the manifest unfairness of opening painful sores and stories better forgotten, a long chapter could be written on the Legion of the Lost Ones who have expiated the folly of an hour in years of lonely exile in South Africa. Many have passed away, unwept and unhonoured; some have made the retreat only a breathing space, and a home of convalescence to fit them for the renewal of their fight against society; a few, a very few, have gone back to civilisation, and are retrieving the past in a new country; but many still linger on.

Various causes keep them chained in their self-appointed prisons. Some have sunk to the lowest depths of mental and physical depravity, have taken to themselves partners from the female outcasts of the kraals, and lead a life of degraded animalism as white Kaffirs, loathed and avoided by black and white alike.

Now and then one meets one of these refugees whose brain has succumbed to the maddening effects of a life of solitude and ostracism. They are not dangerous

lunatics, their mental aberration taking the form of passing attacks of morbid mania, generally the aftermath of a long carouse in secret. Then all the terrors of arrest which have come to them in single spies during the solitary years advance in battalions.

One such recluse has for years led a quiet and reserved life on a remote farm, cultivating a reputation as a misogynist on the strength of a mythical love affair, which makes him a subject of genuine sympathy to the few women in the district. Latterly he has developed acute mania which takes the form of seeing a warrant officer in every moving object. He carries a shot-gun, and has thrice had to pay extravagantly for his partial success as a marksman. Kaffirs have been the victims, women in each case; so that he has indirectly kept up his woman-hating reputation. He has also developed an awkward habit of putting his thoughts and fears into words, and the neighbours spend much time in piecing the evidence so supplied and fitting it to possible correlatives. A case is being constructed which, if not based on a fallacy, should supply a romance of real life and the missing clue to one of the sensational dramas of the English law courts. There is, however, greater probability that the mystery will be buried in a colonial lunatic asylum.

Among the refugees who have sought in the Transvaal a place of retreat and forgetfulness, rather than an asylum and protection from arrest, are, or until the last Boer War were, several who left England to avoid possible prosecution for certain unsavoury lapses. These are without exception men of considerable culture, and this circumstance must render their exile the more irksome, for it is rarely that they have an opportunity of enjoying the company of their intellectual equals. So long as their few associates are persons of a comparatively illiterate type, to whom the march of events in Europe is a matter of no importance and indifference, they are safe; but to

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mix with educated men would be to court inquiry as to antecedents. There is nothing more difficult to most men than to preserve an absolute and cool-headed artificiality that shall be proof against surprise. Sooner or later the most careful blurts out some compromising item of information which affords a clue that has only to be taken up by a curious woman to lead to identification.

A runaway defaulting bank manager had lived in successful hiding in a Transvaal dorp for eight years, making a comfortable living as auctioneer and law and general commission agent. There had been the usual speculation on his first arrival as to what induced an apparently respectable Englishman to elect to settle in a sleepy dorp that offered no probable opening for his superior capacity. He adroitly averted suspicion and curiosity by pretending to have been informed, on the highest medical authority, that the spot possessed certain unique medicinal qualities beneficial to a particular disease that was gnawing his vitals. He also hinted to a few influential townsmen that he was in a position to know that ere long a branch railway would connect the dorp up with the outer world, and that he wanted to rise with the place.

There were two persons in the dorp who read newspapers, and had noticed a sensational case of an absconding bank manager from a Scottish fishing town. They compared notes, watched, and waited. Several circumstances connected with the arrival of the stranger fitted in with the details of the departure of the bank manager, but they might have been merely coincidences. The suspecting pair, aided and abetted by their wives, designed all sorts of innocent-looking baits and entanglements for the suspect to trip over; but he always avoided them. Then, irritated into desperation by their failure at finesse, the ladies boldly, in the presence of witnesses,

asked him if he knew a certain district in Scotland. The answer was an emphatic negative.

Eight years passed, and the few who had once exercised their imagination over the auctioneer's past had ceased to speculate—except one woman. She had neither forgotten nor forgiven. One evening, over the whist table at which she and the auctioneer were partners, there arose one of those discussions which relieved the tedium of dealing. The subject was kippered herrings. The lady had made a sweeping and authoritative assertion as to the process, which was, of course, absurdly wrong. The auctioneer ventured to dissent. "What do you know about it?" came the irritable and irritating retort.

Human nature asserted itself. The sentry had long dozed under the soporific influence of having no cause for extra watchfulness. "Well, considering that I spent the best part of my life in a Scotch fishing village——"

Within two months the auctioneer had disappeared from the dorp. He blew his brains out at Bulawayo after starving for three months.

A gentlemanlike young Englishman settled down as accountant and general commission agent—the last resource of the educated man without a business training—in a Transvaal town, and was doing fairly well. Strangers were too common just then for his advent to excite any special curiosity, so he passed muster as a remittance man who had a little more application and self-control than the common type.

One day a newly-arrived Englishman put up at the leading hotel. He was looking at some gold claims he purposed buying, and gave an office address in Johannesburg. The accountant was passing into the dining-room at lunch-time when he looked up quickly at the visitor, who was arranging terms for a short stay with the hotel manager. The young man was noticed to "look queer," and apparently changed his mind about having lunch,

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for he left the hotel. He never returned. We learned that he had gone immediately to his office, packed a bag and removed a few books and papers, and passed out of ken.

It was a year before we learned that he was a Scottish law agent who had been arrested on a charge of misapplying a client's money, remanded on the bail of his father-in-law—a prominent public man—and failed to appear at the adjourned magisterial hearing.

The visitor whose appearance had caused his second flight was from the same town; but he had not recognised the absconder. Ten years have gone; but nothing, not even the usual rumours, have been heard about the runaway. It was clearly a case of conscience making a coward, for there is every probability that he might have remained undetected for years.

By an odd coincidence the Rand papers, only the week before, had reported a case of a defaulting English solicitor, once known in Johannesburg, being arrested and extradited from the Cape Colony.

A rather sad case occurred in the early days of Johannesburg. Among the first brokers and share dealers was an astute, quiet man, who was evidently a past master at the business. He was rapidly making his pile, and deservedly, for he was a model of all those virtues which should be possessed by a man who has the handling of other people's money. Suddenly it became a matter of remark that he had all at once passed completely under the domineering influence of a newly-arrived typical cockney city clerk sort of person, who had no apparent business, was certainly hard-up when he reached the Rand, but very soon became notorious as a bar loafer who spent money freely. He was on very familiar terms with the Scottish broker, who never seemed at ease in his company and availed himself of every excuse to keep out of it. One day the secret came out. There was a

row between the two men between the "Chains," the spot opposite the Stock Exchange reserved for the share-dealing public. In the presence of a quickly-assembled crowd the loafer denounced the broker as John Nicholson Neil, once well known in the City as the founder of the outside stockbroking establishment of Abbott Page & Co. He had "gone under" badly in the City, and, to avoid a threatened prosecution, left with the assistance of a few friends who sympathised with him, believing that if he had been given a chance he would have pulled through in London. Neil took the exposure to heart, and left for Perth, in Western Australia. But his story followed him. He lost a comfortable position as secretary of the Perth Stock Exchange, drifted badly, and finished miserably.

The cruel part of the business was that at the time the loafer turned up, Neil was remitting money to England to pay off some of the hardest hit of his London victims. The money being sent was diverted to the pocket of the new-comer for reasons that may be guessed, and refusal to pay out more brought the exposure.

If ever there was a case in which the denunciation of a defaulter is a crime, this was the one; and that was the feeling of the majority of the Randites. The exposé was one of the first victims of the small-pox epidemic a year later.

It is, on the whole, satisfactory to be able to record the fact that Randites have not distinguished themselves by spoiling the efforts to make a fresh start by men who have made a mistake. It is superfluous to say that the opportunities for beginning a new life offered by the Rand have been seized upon by many, and in probably the majority of cases the effort has been crowned by success. It may equally be accepted as a fact that a certain amount of blackmailing has resulted from the presence of men who have a past they are not anxious to have revealed.

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Whether there has been more than the average amount of this detestable species of crime than might reasonably be expected cannot be known, but there has been quite enough. Only one case has come to light in which the blackmailer paid anything like a just penalty.

It was in the comparatively early days, when the postal arrangements at Johannesburg were in their most primitive stage, and persons who had not a private box at the office had to inquire for their letters over the counter. It is easy to believe that many a man found himself the innocent possessor of letters intended for some unknown namesake of his.

The villain of this story was the owner of a common English name which we may call Smith, because it was nothing like it. He was no one in particular, waiting for something to turn up. It came in the shape of a letter from a woman in England, filled with details of the so far unsuccessful efforts of the police and his late employers to trace the person for whom that fatal and femininely indiscreet letter was intended. The illicit recipient recognised his man, and conceived a diabolical plan. He wrote by return to the English address given a skilfully and briefly worded reply, in an obviously disguised hand, intimating that part of the letter received had been destroyed by water in transit, and was illegible; therefore, that it should be repeated very fully, and, further, that there was no need for undue caution. He gave a name and address that would ensure the next letter getting into his possession, and sat down and matured his plans.

The other Smith was prosperous, and likely to continue to be. He had arrived in Johannesburg a year before with a sufficiency of capital to give him a good start, which he had retained.

Six weeks later the villain received from the unsuspecting wife of the defaulter a letter which placed him in

possession of most of the story, and all the necessary clues to the remainder, of why Smith came to Johannesburg.

He went boldly to Smith, spurred as much by present necessity as by prospective gain, showed part of his cards, and named his price.

For once in a way the intended victim proved to be made of sterner stuff than most subjects of the black-mailer. As a matter of fact, he was a man of iron nerve, without a particle of fear, as the success and daring of his original crime proved. He was also a marvel of initiative and ready resource. He took a minute or two to pull himself together; then came to business. He impressed the blackmailer with his sincerity by admitting that he was fairly bowled; haggled a bit over terms; paid fifty sovereigns as an earnest of bona fides and future increase, and asked for twenty-four hours' grace. Next day he met the blackmailer, gave him £50 and a ticket for Kimberley, where the creature was to go and await his arrival, when he would complete a business deal that would put him in possession of sufficient cash to complete the transaction. "I also," he explained, "want you out of Johannesburg, for there's no telling how a man with more money than he is used to handling may be tempted to splash it and talk."

The man agreed with the wisdom of the suggestion; besides, he had creditors in Johannesburg who were certain to discover that he was in a position to pay them. Altogether, the Kimberley trip suited him admirably, and he went.

Now, no man can put up at a leading hotel in Diamondopolis, spend money freely, and have no apparent business, without attracting the attention of the astute, eagle-eyed gentry who guard the output of De Beers, particularly when the visit is prolonged for a fortnight. Mr. Smith knew little or nothing of Kimberley and its ways; therefore, was rather gratified than other-

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wise to find himself made much of by a nice fellow whose acquaintance he had made in a bar. The new friend became almost inseparable, until one day he revealed his true character in the presence of a third person, who announced himself as a detective who was going to arrest Mr. Smith on a charge of being in possession of an unregistered diamond, contrary to the law. It was in vain that Mr. Smith declared that the stone had arrived anonymously through the post from a place in the Orange Free State; that it was accompanied by a letter in a handwriting he did not recognise, and that he did not understand what was meant by its contents, which ran :

"Parcel duly to hand. I return one stone, which you must exchange for the larger one you mention, paying the difference. Do be careful, or you will give the game away. Don't talk and drink so much."

The report in the *Kimberley Advertiser* of the case was headed "Sweet Innocence," and the sentence was the merciful one of five years on the breakwater at Cape Town.

When Mr. Smith had concluded his contract with the Government, and had time to make inquiries about his namesake, he learned that that gentleman had departed, with a fortune, over a year before. Present address unknown.

Owing to the non-existence of extradition between the Transvaal and Great Britain, the Transvaal had for twenty years been the recognised asylum for fugitives from English law, and at various times it had the honour of providing sanctuary for several much-wanted individuals. Yet, if any very notorious runaways did seek its shelter, they contrived to conceal their identity. Mr. Robert Ferguson, for many years chief detective of the Rand, used to be kept posted by Scotland Yard with the movements and descriptions of wanted persons; but he

could take no official cognisance of the communications, which, however, he sometimes found of great use as private memoranda. We were once in his company at a local music-hall when he pointed out no fewer than eleven men and three women who were wanted by the English police for offences ranging from suspected murder to forgery and blackmail. The latter offenders were in a surprisingly large majority, and, judging by their opulent exteriors and style of living, they had found their profession highly profitable. They disappeared unostentatiously, singly and in pairs, usually via Delagoa, and, with one exception, there seems to be no record of any of them being captured later.

The solitary case was rather interesting. It occurred during the reign of Andrew Trimble. A man of swarthy, West Indian appearance, known among other names as Tarbeau, appeared in Johannesburg, and splashed considerably on the race-course and at the haunts of the smart set. He became notorious by his reputed lavish presents to certain minor music-hall stars, and for a time was frequently seen in the company of one of the brighter members of the constellation. He was badly wanted by Scotland Yard for a serious offence of the burglary-with-violence order; but the absence of an extradition law stood in the way of the consummation of the heart's desire of the English detective who was waiting and watching for Tarbeau over the border. Of course, the exact details are known only to the authorised, but it happened one day that Mr. Tarbeau took a trip by train to the Free State, accompanied by a lady of the music-hall profession—or, as was later suggested, he followed her. Arrived well into Free State territory, certain minions of the law appeared in the compartment, and after a dramatic but futile struggle the wanted man was handcuffed, and was obliged to continue the journey with two male companions instead of one female. He was duly landed in

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the dock at the Old Bailey, the first and last refugee extracted from the old extraditionless Transvaal.

There was some newspaper correspondence on the manner of the capture, the lady indicated indignantly repudiating any participation in the business; so Andrew Trimble chivalrously accepted full responsibility and took the credit. Whether the lady played Delilah or not matters little. It was one of those cases in which the end justified the means, for in clearing Tarbeau out of the Transvaal a highly undesirable alien was well disposed of.

An incident having all, or at any rate many, of the features familiar to readers of romances with Nihilists and the Russian Secret Police methods as their basis, occurred at Krugersdorp in 1896. There appeared in the dorp an imposing gentleman of opulent and pink appearance, giving the name of Dr. Mueller. He hired the best available house in the place, purchased for it the best furniture the local stores could provide, paid an extravagant price for a pair of spanking horses, with carriage to match, and gave out that he had come to settle down as a medical practitioner.

He introduced himself to a cultured Polish family of the dorp as one of their compatriots, was accepted as such, and during the space of several months played his part with consummate address, doing or omitting nothing that did or did not help out his supposed character—that of a professional man sufficiently well-off to be able to wait for patients. He was in every sense a man of the world, and a very polished specimen. He spoke fluently every European language used in that cosmopolitan and polyglot dorp, and was a particularly fine violinist. Not only did he give his much appreciated services at several concerts got up on behalf of charitable and religious purposes, but liberally and unostentatiously contributed to their funds. Krugersdorp, usually reticent with gilded

strangers, had begun to congratulate itself on an acquisition, when something happened.

About two years before a local man who owned a not too prosperous native store some miles out, on the way to Rustenburg, sold it to a stranger. The unthinking few who had met him described the new store-keeper as a Peruvian—i.e. low-class Russian or Pole. It needed only a very slight acquaintance to satisfy a qualified observer that this was no Peruvian, but a highly cultured person. He spoke perfect French and German, and his English was of the academic order. It was equally plain that he was a new hand at commerce. He traded under a common German-Jewish name, but owned to the Polish rank of Count, and a name ending in "sky." His reserved and solitary life resulted in his existence being scarcely known outside a very small area; therefore, when Dr. Mueller asked one or two persons in a casual manner whether they knew of a Pole answering the description of the store-keeper, it was not surprising that he got no useful information.

Then the doctor took to long drives in his ornate carriage, wandering out to districts west, north and south of Krugersdorp, and always instructing his driver to pull up at any wayside stores.

One day it became known in the dorp that the doctor had discovered a long-lost friend and fellow-student in the Peruvian store-keeper, and that the pair were going to Cape Town and other places on a combined business and holiday expedition. A week later it was discovered that the doctor had quietly paid up his accounts and left the dorp without leaving even a single p.p.c. The store-keeper also had gone, and the place was locked up, a Kaffir servant being left in charge of the living-room and the pony. He only knew that the baas was coming back in a month.

The month became three. The Kaffir deserted, and

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the landlord distrained for rent; but we never saw either the store-keeper or Dr. Mueller again. A series of inquiries instituted by the Polish family who first received the doctor left an uncomfortable feeling that they had unconsciously aided and abetted an agent of the Russian Government.

It was discovered that the store-keeper was seen in the company of the doctor at a small Cape Town hotel, where he kept to his room, apparently as the result of drink, but there is reason to believe that the dazed appearance was due to drugs. The most startling and suggestive fact in connection with the story, however, was supplied by a dock policeman. One evening his attention was attracted by a party of four persons who drove up to the wharf entrance in two cabs. They were officers and seamen of a Russian timber-ship lying at the wharf, and were escorting a man who seemed to be drunk, for he resisted feebly and muttered and talked like a befuddled man. The constable simply looked on, as the party required no assistance. He remarked that the drunken man had such an Oriental appearance that at first he took him for an Arab or Malay in European dress.

Now, the store-keeper had sharp, aquiline features and a swarthy complexion, and was, on his first arrival in the Krugersdorp district, taken for an Indian or Banyan; indeed, so deceptive was his appearance that the landlord was taken to task for letting his place to a coolie, the agitation against the Indian trader being then in its early stage.

When the deserted store was overhauled, a quantity of literature was found which left no doubt that the mysteriously departed store-keeper was deeply interested in Russian politics.

There is another type of recluse whose retirement from the world is the result not of original, but of acquired, sin. He has, as often as not, drifted into the habits and

customs which have made him an outcast from respectability, and is paying a severe penalty for his ignorance or want of self-control.

He is known throughout the country as a white Kaffir because he has outraged the unwritten law and taken to himself a wife from among the original people of the land.

So long as this intermixture of white and black blood is not only condoned but glorified by ignorant enthusiasts, who see in it a royal road to universal brotherhood, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to make stay-at-home Britishers appreciate the horror with which South African Colonials regard such unions. Rightly or wrongly, they hold in detestation any white man who takes to wife a native woman, and refuse to regard him any longer as entitled to consideration as a member of the paramount race. They say, with some show of truth, that such unions are essentially a sign of mental and physical depravity, and that the offspring must be inferior, because it is the fruit of a white man of low moral type and a native woman who, by consenting to the union, proves that she was already an outcast from her own people. In the majority of cases this accurately sums up the conditions that rendered the marriage possible. There have been cases, however, in which a mistaken religious zeal has been the inspiration; but they are rare. We know of only one instance in which a woman of the educated classes has married a Kaffir, and she was certainly actuated by misdirected missionary zeal. Needless to say, the union proved a disastrous failure, which was the more pitiable because the woman realised too late that she had sacrificed herself for an unrealisable and futile ideal.

There is a "leading case" in Natal. A man of refinement and education was given the option by his mother of sacrificing a fortune or marrying a native woman whom

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his parent—an enthusiastic and zealous missionary—had had educated on European lines. The man weakly yielded, and is to-day a social pariah, for his wife is not recognised by the most vulgar white woman in the country, while she is equally unable to find companionship with her own folk, to whom she is utterly alien. He is despised and shunned by all, and the pair spend their lives in planning how to avoid the snubs and open insults of their white neighbours who are intellectually far their inferiors. This, fortunately, is an exceptional case.

Most of the whites living in seclusion with native wives have much the same excuse and explanation to offer. They arrived in the country young, and holding, probably, conventional English ideas on the brotherhood of man phantasy. The nature of their business kept them in a part of the country where white women were rare or non-existent, and the sequel followed. Usually, the union was intended to be temporary, but the criticism and expostulation of neighbours produced a stubborn resistance, pride forbade recognition of the right of the public to interfere, and the critics were told to mind their own business. Naturally, any social relationship with white neighbours ceased; the headstrong youth was boycotted and thrown entirely upon the society of his ill-assorted partner. Time widened the breach and made the new conditions so much part of life and habit that all desire to abandon them gradually died, and in the course of a few years the white Kaffir has become absolutely irreclaimable. If ever he is asked whether he would undo the past if he could, he answers with an emphatic, often defiant "No!" but it never rings true.

The principals in these *mésalliances* are not entitled to more sympathy than they get; it is the children who deserve it. They are doomed to a life of cruel pariahship, despised and condemned by natives and whites alike. If, as sometimes happens, the father inculcates a little educa-

tion, the cruelty is intensified, for it widens the gulf between the child and his mother's race, and gives him a capacity for appreciating the higher pleasures of his father's people, on which he can look, Tantalus-like, but never touch or enjoy. To those who can feel sympathy with the victims of unattainable desire, there is no more pathetic figure than that of an "educated" half-caste in South Africa. The lot of his father is hard, but he chose it for himself; the son had no choice. He was born to woe, the victim of a white man's selfishness.

Here and there one comes upon creatures who have chosen deliberately the lot of the white Kaffir. They are invariably degenerates, and probably, if they had remained in Europe, would have sought a mate among the lowest of the low. The only cause for regret is that this species is reproductive.

CHAPTER X

HIDDEN-TREASURE QUESTS

Stories of Hidden Treasure —Magato's Calabash of Diamonds—A Mystery of Swaziland—The Basuto's Diamond—Ancient Gold Thieves—"Charlie the Reefer's" Secret—A Priest's Find—The Treasure Cave of an Extinct Tribe—The Dying Grounds of the Elephants—Why Emin Pasha was Relieved—The Misleading of Carl Mauch—A Mountain of Platinum—Wrecked Treasure Ships—Kruger's Millions—The Yarn of the *Dorothy*—Von Veltheim's Story—The Search for the Jameson Raiders' Guns—A Krugersdorp Mare's Nest

It is quite in harmony with the mystery attached for centuries to Africa that legends and traditions of hidden treasure should be as numerous as they undoubtedly are in the land. They fill the place occupied in older civilisations by stories of the supernatural, and, like them, have many scoffers and sceptics in public, but almost an equal number of believers, active or passive.

Some years ago the present writer published in the Transvaal *Sentinel* an article dealing with the subject, and suggested that a systematic investigation of some of these stories was more likely to repay the effort than many investments in certain gold mines. The result was little short of astonishing. During the three or four months ensuing he was the recipient of scores of letters from persons in every part of Africa—and even in England, Australia and the remote regions of America—all professing knowledge of the existence of some treasure that only needed the conjoining of capital to their information to bring fortune to both contributors. Correspondents at a distance, however pertinacious, need not become a serious infliction; it is very different when the possessor of the secret appears in person, and refuses to depart without

either an agreement to purchase his secret or compensation for having offered an option on it. He turned up every few days, always more or less travel-stained and in need of nourishment; often too full of one brand of it to be able to unfold his story until he had recovered.

When a vigorous weeding-out process had been completed, entailing a healthy resolution and strength of character both in saying "No" and in enduring the abuse and reproaches of the rejected, there remained an interesting and promising residuum of potential fortune-bringers in the shape of some sixteen or seventeen men whose stories were *prima facie* credible, and whose records were such as to justify further consideration.

The bulk of the would-be guides claimed to hold the only clue to the five African treasure mysteries which may be said to be classic, inasmuch as belief in them is general, and the stories themselves, though varying somewhat in details, are common property among representatives of the older generation of South Africans.

The most popular was that of the Magato diamonds, referred to in the previous chapter and in the chapter on gun-running. The number of men who claim to have had a sight of that dazzling calabash hardly fits in with the known fact that old Magato was extremely chary of holding intercourse with casual white visitors, and the chances of so many having gained access to the royal kraal and having been privileged with a sight of the royal treasure are remote. However, that the Transvaal Government Executive believed in the existence of the diamonds is reasonably well established. It is probable that when 'Mpfeu, the son and successor of Magato, fled before the Boer commando in 1897 he carried the stones with him. If he be dead, as many believe, the interesting question, What has become of the treasure? can only be answered by the chief induna who accompanied him.

There is a belief among a few whose opinions are

entitled to a respectful consideration that the stones were deposited by Magato, just before his death, in the care of a store-keeper in the district who enjoyed the old chief's confidence. It is reasonably inferred that the motive was to prevent them being dissipated by his son, 'Mpfeu, who had already developed signs of that weakness which was his undoing. The store-keeper is a man of wealth, also of character, and if any special conditions attached to the trusteeship, he is not a person likely to ignore them. If, however, the Magato dynasty has ceased to exist, a nice question arises as to the legal ownership of a treasure which most who do know anything of it agree at being worth well over a million pounds. Although he never acknowledged it, Magato was a subject chief of the late Transvaal Government, and his successor a conquered subject whose country was formally taken possession of by the conquerors. Herein is a nice point for the consideration of the constitutional lawyers. Another point might be more easily settled by the criminal lawyers. Every one of those diamonds was stolen by Magato's subjects when working on the diamond mines at Kimberley.

Diamonds are the lure in the next tradition which has its believers and professed demonstrators of its reasonableness. It is said that there exists in a remote part of Swaziland—which, like Zululand and Basutoland, is a rigorously conserved native reservation—an area of diamondiferous ground so rich that stones lie exposed upon the surface. The story runs that the late chief, Umbandine, was so fearful of losing his country if the existence of its diamond wealth became known that he made it death for any of his subjects to go upon the ground; also, lest the possession of diamonds by himself should arouse suspicion, he refrained from touching them. Consequently, the prospective new Kimberley is still absolutely virgin soil.

This story was the only one of which the narrators did

not claim personal knowledge. Three men professed to be able to act as guides to this Tom Tiddler's ground, but only through the good offices of certain Swazis who were under the customary obligation which—in the novels and plays—is repaid by placing the benefactor in possession of the potentialities of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. There was a second unusual feature connected with the holders of this secret. All three of them, when asked the pertinent question why they had not taken advantage of their knowledge and opportunity, gave the same reason, though presumably unknown to each other. They had separately and independently taken liberties with a member of the royal family of Swaziland, which was punishable with death. Hence their diffidence and self-restraint in the face of strong temptation to return to the country.

One of the few pieces of indirect evidence that lend a colour of probability to this story is this:

A year or two before the death of Umbandine a party of Boers visited Swaziland on business of the Transvaal Government. One of them left his fellows for a day or two, nominally on a hunting expedition. When he returned he bore the outward and visible signs of a man who had undergone severe physical tribulation. His explanation was regarded as "thin," but as he did not show any disposition to make a grievance of his misfortune, or discuss it, the matter was not inquired into too closely. On his return to Pretoria it leaked out that his injuries were the reward of an indiscreet propensity for trespassing on forbidden ground. He is reported to have remarked, "And the worst of it is I never saw a single diamond."

As evidence, it is distinctly of the negative order, but there were many who accepted it as proof that there was something in Swaziland that Umbandine was not keen on showing to white visitors, even though they were

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representatives of a friendly neighbouring government. The most noteworthy feature of the story is that a Boer should have submitted to physical outrage by a Kaffir without seeking vengeance.

These are the only standard treasure stories in which diamonds are the principal feature, if we except one sometimes told of a wonderfully large stone said to be in the possession of a petty chief in Basutoland. According to the tradition, this stone is a second Koh-i-noor; but the only real thing about it is that several persons have allowed themselves to be victimised by two brothers, once well known in Johannesburg, who traded on the myth. One ex-Pretorian official fell into the trap, journeyed to Basutoland, had a midnight meeting in a dark hut with the supposititious chief, who was prepared to part with the stone for £600 in sovereigns on the distinct understanding that his son and co-owner of the stone should not be informed of the sale. The stone was passed through a hole in the grass wall, and the bag of sovereigns handed through in exchange. The purchaser describes how he nearly fainted with emotion when he felt the enormous size of the stone. He fainted completely when he saw it in the daylight next morning, and realised that he had paid the record price for a piece of cut glass.

The "chief" was one of the white men who were the nominal agents in the deal, and the cruellest part of the business was that they laid information against their dupe for being in possession of an unregistered diamond and for prospecting in Basutoland contrary to the strictly-enforced regulations. The official was arrested, and only released, after a week, on depositing £200 bail, which was later estreated, because he dared not return to meet the charge by telling the world how he, an astute Pretorian official, had been swindled by a childish trick.

A fascinating and probable tradition is that which has lured many bold spirits to that region of Eastern Africa

which most authorities agree in fixing upon as the Land of Ophir and as the home of the Queen of Sheba. Whether it was the veritable site of the prehistoric Rand or not, it must be admitted that the advocates of the theory make out a very good case. Nothing can be more certain than the fact that evidences abound of ancient gold workings; but whether the miners were those elusive "ancients" or the Portuguese adventurers of the sixteenth century matters little in view of the reality that gold was, is, and will be found there.

D. M. Wilson, the first gold commissioner of De Kaap, tells in his book, "Behind the Scenes in the Transvaal," how evidences of the original gold workings were frequently discovered by prospectors from Barberton. He mentions that he registered in his official capacity many finds of pure gold brought in by prospectors, who had discovered them under conditions which suggested that the gold had been secreted, probably by the progenitors of the Rand amalgam thieves. In many cases the treasure was covered with stones bearing marks, and even inscriptions. One such stone was brought for Wilson's inspection. It was covered with hieroglyphics, which the only educated man in camp pronounced to be Phœnician, and the stone, described as being "about the size of an ordinary gravestone," was put aside and forgotten. When inquiry was made for it later, it was discovered that a local mason had used it as part of the wall of the new jail. Unfortunately, it was laid horizontally and, of course, completely covered. A few generations hence it will be rediscovered, and archæologists will write volumes to prove that the Phœnicians were familiar with nineteenth century building methods and Portland cement.

In the early days of Barberton a familiar character among the pioneers was a Californian miner known as "Charlie the Reefer." He was so called because he was an early upholder of the theory, since proved correct, that

the De Kaap district was richer in reef gold than alluvial. He was always looking for reefs, but, oddly enough, found nothing but alluvial. He would disappear on a prospecting trip for a month or more, and return bringing literally a hat full of the largest nuggets ever seen on the fields. He steadfastly refused to disclose and register the scene of his finds or to impart any information as to their source. A stock phrase of his, when on rare occasions he did discuss his luck, was to the effect that he had come upon "treasure laid up for him by others." This was interpreted to mean that he had come upon some of the hidden plunder of the ancient gold thieves.

Acting on the hint, many men set out to follow Charlie, or to discover his hunting-ground on their own account. He was an adept in eluding pursuit, and more than one of his followers came to grief by losing their way and undergoing the horrors of being lost in the wilds for weeks. The disappearance of a man from a mining camp in those days was not a matter of moment, therefore there is no record of the number who have paid the penalty of solitary exploration. Wilson puts the figure very high. Charlie himself finally disappeared, but whether he shared the fate of his followers or, obeying the impulse of the born prospector, sought new fields is only a matter of conjecture. During his short career on the De Kaap fields he brought in some thousands of pounds' worth of nuggets, which it is believed he never dug or washed for.

In 1895 a young Irishman named O'Brien, who had for some time been a member of the bar-loafing brigade of Johannesburg, amused his acquaintances by announcing that he had met a man from the Barberton district who knew all about ancient treasures, and was joining him in a search expedition to the spot. O'Brien, being a typical irresponsible, amusing Irishman, was popular, and a modest subscription was got up to "give him a fair start," and particularly to render unnecessary his declared

intention of walking all the way. He joined his partner (who was not known or seen in Johannesburg) at Pretoria, and was lost to sight and rumour for about nine months, when he returned as poor as when he left, except that what remained of his clothes and the documentary evidence of pawn-tickets supported his story that the treasure quest had proved fruitful, that they had discovered a big hoard of nuggets under circumstances suggesting they had been hidden for ages, but that the partner had proved a rogue, and disappeared with the bulk of the spoil. A later edition of the story, issued in revised form by the author, was generally accepted as more likely to be the probable one. It told how O'Brien celebrated their first success by a wild orgie of drink and other things in Barberton, and that the partner, growing tired of waiting for the oft-promised sobering-up process, returned up-country alone. O'Brien died miserably the year of the Jameson Raid, which he reported for a Johannesburg paper. He was found dead from exposure on the road to Barberton, whither he was tramping in accordance with a frequently uttered resolution to find the treasure for himself.

The partner was unknown to O'Brien's Johannesburg acquaintances, but a rumour was current a year or two afterwards that a man answering his description was living in a Midland county town in circumstances that betokened affluence.

About this same period—1895-6—there arrived in Pretoria a gentleman-like person of advanced years, who, during several months, was making cautious inquiries regarding the whereabouts of two men who did not appear to be known in the area of the search. The old gentleman was himself a trifle mysterious. His courtly, cultured manner suggested an ecclesiastic, and several things said and done by him helped out the idea that he was, or had been, a Roman Catholic priest. He always seized eagerly upon any point which took the conversation to Portuguese

territory, where we gathered he had spent some time just before visiting the Transvaal. He frequently expressed a desire, almost amounting to a mania, to meet and talk with men who knew that part of South Africa of which the north-east of the Transvaal is the southern and western boundary. Now and then his wish was gratified; but as the class of men he mostly met were uncommunicative until well filled with liquor, and forgetful afterwards of what had occurred over night, the attempts of the curious to learn the nature of the old gentleman's researches were usually fruitless. In the course of six months his accustomed haunts knew him no more, but during the late Boer war he turned up at Durban among the refugees from the Transvaal who had come down via Delagoa Bay. He had aged considerably, and bore signs of having undergone great privations. A Johannesburg man who had made his acquaintance on board the boat told the writer that the old gentleman was fast approaching senility, and that he talked much, but incoherently, of a grandfather who was a Portuguese missionary priest in Portuguese East Africa nearly a hundred years ago; that this old priest had found a stone grave filled with gold, and, having brought some of it away to England, resigned his priesthood, and married. He had died on a journey to Africa many years afterwards, his mission being the recovery of the balance of the treasure.

Although he did not definitely make the statement or admit it, the old gentleman's remarks left an impression that he had spent a long time in an effort to discover his grandfather's hoard. Like too many treasure-hunters, he was doomed to failure. He died of dysentery in a Durban cheap boarding-house, and was buried at the expense of the Johannesburger. The name he gave was Jones, but it was obviously false.

About 1896 a very old Kaffir of indeterminate race origin appeared at Pretoria, and made many unsuccessful

efforts to obtain an interview with Paul Kruger. He was so persistent that he became a nuisance, and was handed over to the police and sent by the landdrost to jail for a month or two. On his release he renewed his quest, and displayed so much earnestness and pertinacity that an official's curiosity was excited. He spoke kindly to the old man, and, having won his confidence, got from him his story, or as much of it as he could be induced to tell.

He represented himself as the sole survivor of one of the small native tribes that had been absorbed or "eaten up" by the Zulus. Feeling that he had not long to live, he was desirous of imparting to Kruger a king's secret of which he was the official depository. He was, he said, the son of the chief induna of the last chief of his tribe; his father, by virtue of his office, was the holder of the secret of a treasure cave whence the chiefs of the extinct tribe derived their wealth. It was a cave of pure gold, and the old man had many a time accompanied his father to the spot, procured a quantity of the metal, and taken it to Delagoa Bay, where it was exchanged by certain store-keepers for such articles as were needed by the chief. As there was no longer any chief, the secret belonged, of right, to Paul Kruger, who was now actual chief, since the tribe had inhabited the Transvaal. Pressed to give further details, the old man refused, replying with one stereotyped form: "It is a king's secret, and can only be told to a king."

The official, being much impressed by the native's manner, and more so by the fact that no favour was sought in exchange for the information, saw the President and endeavoured to induce him to see the native. Kruger declined, but authorised the late General Joubert to take the matter in hand and verify the story. On this being told to the Kaffir, he repeated his refusal to impart the secret to anyone but the President in person; and after a

few more vain efforts, and threats of arrest from the sentries at the Presidency, the old man disappeared, and has, presumably, joined his father, since a vigorous search for him, extending over twelve months, failed to reveal his whereabouts.

A year or two later the official who had interested himself in the matter, and who organised the hunt for the old man, came upon a likely clue. An old Basuto presented himself and declared that he knew the old Kaffir, also the treasure cave, having been once with him to obtain some gold from it. He stated that both were arrested for being in possession of gold, and were imprisoned at Krugersdorp. Inquiries at the magistrate's office at the dorp revealed the fact that two natives had been convicted at the time and under the circumstances detailed by the Basuto. This looked very much like strong corroborative evidence; but there was a very weak link in the chain. The Basuto fixed the site of the cave in the limestone formation at Sterkfontein, near Krugersdorp. It was so much opposed to all precedent, both of geological theory and mining practice on the Rand, that gold should be found in a limestone formation that the official was disposed to dismiss the Basuto as an impostor, when he was reassured by a rumour of a discovery of alluvial near the spot, and resolved on going through with the business. He entered the great stalactite cave at Sterkfontein, guided by the Basuto, and emerged twelve hours later thirsting for the blood of his guide, who had mysteriously disappeared by some secret exit. That treasure cave has yet to be discovered.

There is an unexciting sameness and absence of originality of detail about most stories of buried treasure, and particularly those relating to hidden gold. Yet, in spite of this, or perhaps because of their commonplace character, it is always easy to enthuse somebody sufficiently to test their truth. The fact that one may hunt

in vain for the record of a successful organised search proves no deterrent to such adventurers. It is an axiom among these optimists that the more ground that has been unsuccessfully explored, the greater the chance of those who follow, because the process of elimination has reduced the size of the unexploited area. This persistency implies great initial faith in the probability of the story. It is a characteristic of all treasure-seekers that they are easily convinced, on the well-recognised principle that men ask for very slight corroboration of what they wish to believe. There are in South Africa to-day at least a dozen men who have expended many years and all their resources in pursuit of some glittering will-o'-the-wisp, and are only prevented from continuing it by want of means. The belief in hidden treasure and the possibility of unearthing it becomes an obsession with men of a certain temperament.

To the present writer these stories have always had a peculiar fascination, not from their potentialities as wealth bringers, but as phases of character study. He has made it his business to investigate every African treasure story that has come to his knowledge, but in no case has he met a successful searcher, or one who has accepted repeated failures as final.

The latter assertion may be qualified in one case. He has met one man who there is good reason for believing has succeeded in discovering an oft-discussed but rarely seen, by white men, dying ground of the elephants. There is a belief among the natives and a few white hunters that the elephant, as old age begins to assert itself, retires to some secret and remote spot where, among the skeletons and tusks of hundreds of his progenitors, he calmly awaits death, and in a few months every particle of flesh and skin left by the vultures is removed by the ants. Such a spot must be a veritable valley of dry bones plus many thousands of

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pounds' worth of the most valuable bones in the world—ivory.

Such dying grounds when discovered by natives become the special perquisite of the chief. Elaborate precautions are taken to preserve the secret of the road to the spot, and it is suggested that one good reason why it is so rarely divulged is that not only is the original discoverer sent to a place where silence is profound and eternal, but that the natives who are sent to collect and bring in the ivory are assisted with a free passage to the same place on completing their task.

In the old days, when the native chiefs were only beginning to realise that ivory was a marketable commodity, every tusk and tooth found on a dying ground would be removed to the chief's kraal. But bitter experience soon showed the danger of displaying such wealth. The Arab trader came along, and paid for the treasure in fire and bullets instead of the usual material of exchange and barter. Therefore successive chiefs grew wary, and took from the stock only a few samples, thereby ensuring their own safety by not exciting the cupidity of the Arab, and, incidentally, forestalling the custom of the diamond industry by limiting the output and keeping up prices.

The person referred to as being an exception to the rule that treasure seekers never find, had for a brief time been in Central Africa with Emin Pasha, whom he met while on a solitary elephant hunting expedition. It was Emin who told him of these dying grounds, and inspired him with the treasure seekers' mania. This knowledge was imparted by way of repayment for certain kindly services given when Emin was in sore distress and out of reach of his numerous retinue.

For some years the hunter followed up the clues given him by the German savant, and at last was rewarded by success. He had stalked all day a very

large and obviously ancient elephant, and, luckily being very short of ammunition, delayed firing until near enough to be sure of his game. The elephant kept in a wide marshy vlei or valley, where if shot he could not be reached owing to the impassable sludge and undergrowth. Slowly the great beast proceeded up the valley, halting every few yards as if too feeble to go farther, sometimes standing half an hour in the same position. At last it turned abruptly towards the farther side of the swamp, and made for a wooded kloof or gully. The hunter still held his fire to make certain of getting the beast on firm ground. When within a few yards of the dry land the elephant paused as it had many times before. For over half an hour he stood, several times looking backwards towards the hunter, who was cautiously finding a way around the marsh in order to get within easy range. He stumbled and fell in the long grass. On getting up he caught a flash glance of the elephant disappearing in the kloof five hundred yards away. A shot under the circumstances would have been waste of a valuable cartridge, so he followed the game. Arrived at the kloof, he was able to enter what would have been an impassable thicket but for the track made by the elephant, whom he could hear, but not see, tearing down trees and branches. Although apparently only a hundred yards long, the path made was strangely circuitous. Even had he been able to see the elephant a shot would have been risky, for the beast would almost certainly have charged, and the prospect of escape in that entanglement was very remote. So he followed on, cautiously awaiting developments.

Presently the sounds of crashing and tearing branches ceased, and were succeeded by a series of cries and trumpetings unlike anything the hunter had ever heard during a long experience of the African wilds. It was the elephant's death-song.

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A few minutes later the hunter came to the end of the track, and was looking down into a sort of crater about three hundred yards in diameter. It was chock-a-block with white bones and the gleaming tusks of elephants! The object of his chase stood twenty yards away, waving his trunk and surveying the scene as if seeking a place in which to lie down, for there was scarcely room for a horse to lie between the skeleton frames. Before the great beast could make up his mind, three bullets had settled the spot for him.

"And the sequel? You made a fortune?"

He shook his head.

"The old German swore he already knew the ground, and that if I made any attempt to remove the ivory or sent other white men to get it, I or they would never leave the country. The ground, he said, was a chief's preserve."

"What became of the ivory?"

"I don't know. It was all gone a year or two later, but I don't think the Stanley people got any of it."

"Why should they?"

The hunter smiled suggestively. "Do you think Stanley went to relieve Emin or Emin's ivory?"

That these dying grounds do exist and are occasionally discovered by the natives is borne out by a circumstance frequently mentioned by persons who have been in "the elephant country," as most of the old hunters described the regions we now know as Rhodesia, British and Portuguese East Africa, and British Central Africa. It has occurred that traders in quest of ivory have visited district after district, and been able to purchase a few tusks only. A short time afterwards—a year, or even two or three months—they have received information from a chief who had nothing to sell on the occasion of the visit, to the effect that a great hunt had taken place, and that he now had plenty of ivory. Any one conversant with the conditions of elephant hunting

would know perfectly well that no hunt on a big scale could have taken place, for there were none of the usual unmistakable signs in evidence; further, the tusks offered for sale were weather-worn, and looked just as one might reasonably expect ivory to look after it had lain for years exposed to the elements.

The reasonable explanation is that a dying ground had been discovered since the visit of the trader, or, what is more probable, the chief had drawn on his secret store in an old dying ground after having put up the price of ivory by refusing to sell on the first inquiry.

Several authorities are sceptical as to the existence of these dying grounds, but it must be admitted that their testimony is purely negative; they refuse to believe in them because they have never found one.

As the hunter mentioned remarked, when asked why other white men do not believe in the tradition: "It is a fact that even the longest-lived elephants that are not killed by hunters, must die somewhere, and we know that most wild animals when dying make for an out-of-the-way place if they have the strength. It is a curious thing that no one seems ever to have come upon an elephant that has died a natural death, and it is ridiculous to imagine that all are killed. Pythons and mambas go to certain spots to die, away from their regular haunts, and why not elephants? As to the question, Why do not white men find these grounds? the answer is easy. For one white man who passes hurriedly through a country there are fifty thousand natives who remain there all their lives. Besides, I am not so sure that white men do not discover them. They would not make a song about it if they did. If I had got away with that ivory I found I should have given out that I had shot or traded for it. I don't want the country full of fellows hunting my game. All big-game hunters do all they can to keep their best country secret.

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That's why they always describe a new district as the worst they have ever seen, if they talk about it at all."

The old man asserts that several Boers had seen the Victoria Falls long before Stanley's time. John Jennings, the elephant hunter, and his partner Hartley knew that Lake Ngami was a paradise for big-game hunters before it was on the map, and both these men are alive to-day. This very natural inclination to keep a good thing for oneself has enabled more than one African explorer to reap the rewards that should rightly have gone to others. The pioneers of unknown Africa were more interested in collecting skins and horns than Royal Geographical Society's medals. It is questionable whether they could have drawn the roughest plan or map of any new district they wandered into in pursuit of game. One old Boer known to the writer had hunted elephants and rhinoceroses for many years in the Lake Ngami region, and to his dying day insisted that the lake was situate quite two hundred miles eastward of its actual position. It is a debatable point whether this was genuine ignorance or deep design, the outcome of a long habit of putting possible rivals off the track of his own preserves.

This same instinct of self-preservation characterised the old gold prospectors. They took elaborate precautions to "stall off" possible followers. Charlie the Reefer would return to his secret treasure house by a circuitous route, occupying a week, the actual spot being probably within a twenty-hour journey. Carl Mauch, the German explorer, who in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies explored the Northern Transvaal and the regions now included in Eastern Rhodesia, wasted many months in following up false trails purposely given him by Boer and other hunters to whom he applied for information; he in his innocence assuming that they were as keen as himself in making the world a present of geographical knowledge. The entire plan of his original expedition

was upset and diverted by this cause, though in the long run he probably discovered as much on the new route as he would have done on the intended one.

Much the same spirit seems to have actuated the informers and guides who have from time to time induced governments or syndicates to undertake the verification of some of these treasure stories. Always the same result has followed: someone made a mistake in locating the landmarks. Exactly how many expeditions have set out in quest of hidden treasure in Africa during the past twenty-five years it would be impossible to say, for the good and sufficient reason that in most cases the adventurers have been sensibly and discreetly silent—silent at the beginning lest they should be anticipated or followed; more silent afterwards lest they should provoke laughter and ridicule by their failure. The ostensible and declared objective of these treasure-seeking jaunts is usually sport or prospecting. Now and then the promoters have been unable to disguise the nature of their quest because of the need of canvassing for financial assistance. The search for the mountain of platinum, said to have been seen by a German doctor, was a matter of public knowledge on the three occasions when the expedition was organised by the optimistic author of the yarn.

His story was that, in travelling as an itinerant medical practitioner and hunter, he lost his bearings in the Kalahari desert, and, leaving his wagon, set out on foot alone to pick up the track. As usually happens in the absence of credible witnesses in Africa, circumstances arose which would have rendered their presence extremely valuable. The doctor came upon a block of pure platinum some ten cubic feet in size, and naturally worth more than its weight in gold. He took careful notes of the position, and went farther afield, tracing the block to its source after the approved methods of prospectors

who find alluvial gold in the streams or dry gullies. He was rewarded by discovering what he described as a veritable mountain of the metal, and the object of his life was to bring in sufficient samples to convince the sceptical financiers of the Rand that he had pegged out a claim worth more than any gold mine on the reef.

He made his first effort to raise the necessary capital in the Orange River Colony, but the Free Staters are not as a body enamoured of this class of enterprise. They have a better use for their spare cash in developing their farming business—a matter they understand.

The doctor next tried the Cape Colony, varying the conditions slightly to suit his audience. He asked to be provided not so much with ready cash as wagons, oxen, stores and such material as a small community would have on hand. The Old Colonials, however, proved stolidly indifferent, and all the doctor got was good counsel and a recommendation to try Johannesburg. He did not approach the magnates of the Gold Reef City, but went on to Krugersdorp. There he told his story to various substantial and speculative local business men, who at first were shy. It happened one night, while telling his story in an hotel smoking-room, an assertive young Afrikaner official flatly denounced the doctor as a fraud, and challenged him to prove to the satisfaction of a certain local authority on these subjects that he had any knowledge of mineralogy. The challenge was accepted, the umpire brought in, and the doctor submitted to a raking cross-examination on every possible phase of his alleged discovery. He emerged triumphantly, the examiner remarking that if the doctor knew as much about medicine as he clearly did of platinum, he must stand very high in his profession.

On the strength of this excellent testimonial half a dozen local men undertook to provide the wanted capital,

and a few days later the doctor started for the Kalahari with £500 for the equipment of his expedition.

When anyone propounds a scheme for getting rich quickly to a West Rand man to-day, the latter will ask, "Is it platinum?" There are six local business men there on whom mention of that metal has much the effect said to be produced by waving a red rag in front of a bull.

The gentleman who acted as catechiser and examiner of the doctor, as well as the young Afrikaner official who initiated the testing process have frequently had to suffer vexatious imputations of confederacy, but the only evidence produced against them was that they spent half an hour in the company of the doctor earlier in the day, which in a cosmopolitan resort like Krugersdorp proved nothing except the sociability of the townsfolk with strangers.

It was not till two or three years later that a visitor from Cape Colony told how a precisely similar incident had occurred in Cape Town. There the doctor was challenged, tried and acquitted on the spot by a mining expert, and raised £350 as the result. If he found that platinum he omitted to report the fact.

Among the minor treasure-hunting schemes that now and then find supporters is one for recovering the enormously valuable cargo supposed to have been on board some or all of the East Indiamen that were wrecked so prolifically on the South African coast during a couple of centuries. There are vague stories of portions of these vessels lying in comparatively accessible positions not only near the water's edge, but actually beneath the surface of the foreshore where they have been sucked into what were once quicksands.

The evidence is provokingly scanty, and consists mainly of local tradition. Like the proverbial ghost story, the existence of these tempting treasure holds has

never been verified by those who believe most firmly in them. They pin their faith on the statements of some person who heard the story from a third, and he, besides invariably being long dead, apparently profited nothing by his faith or knowledge.

A Transvaaler, whose boyhood was passed in the Transkei district, has told the author of an experience which goes to prove that one person had sufficient faith in the quicksand theory to spend time and money in putting it to the test. For some years a neighbouring Boer worked laboriously in sinking prospecting shafts on the beach at the mouth of the Great Kei River in hopes of finding a Dutch East Indiaman which, according to local native tradition, was "sucked in" more than a hundred years before. Several old natives declared that they had seen the wreck, and during the years watched its gradual subsidence. Presumably the coast must have gained on the sea at this spot, though inquiry has not confirmed the suggestion.

Our informant described several articles which the farmer had purchased from the natives, who had found them on the beach long before. The one which made the greatest impression upon the lad answered the description of an Indian gun of the type common in museums—a sort of jingal. It had a barrel longer than the farmer, who was over six feet, and the stock and butt were inlaid with "beautiful red stones," whose names were unknown; they were possibly rubies. Another article in the collection was an elaborately carved yellow-wood box, about eighteen inches square, also set with "pretty stones," and containing a peculiarly shaped, gaudily painted piece of pottery of the vase order. The mouth was covered with a piece of bladder. The box gave out a faint odour which, according to the description, was attar of roses. Our informant was a boy of ten or twelve years of age at the time, and, like most impressions

received at that age, these remained very fresh. On the strength of them he had built up a dramatic belief that the farmer did find treasure, for, although a poor man, he purchased a valuable vineyard for his daughter when she married some years later, paying for it right out in prompt cash, which he would never have been able to do from the profits of his own farm.

The story is probable though vague, and if not true should be, if only to confirm the alleged law by which exceptions are said to prove a rule. There have been several organised efforts to recover the treasure believed to lie in the hulls of the fifty or sixty known and suspected wrecks that dot the South African coast from Port Shepstone to Cape Agulhas; but so far the results have not got beyond definitely locating about half a dozen.

During the last year of the Boer War a sailing vessel, named the *Dorothy*, bound from Delagoa Bay to Durban, went ashore on the Zululand coast near the entrance to St. Lucia Bay. A rumour got abroad to the effect that the vessel had cemented at the bottom of her hold a quantity of bar gold; that the *Dorothy* had been chartered on behalf of Paul Kruger, and the gold, which had been commandeered from the Rand mines, was being consigned to Europe as a nest egg for the survivors from the wreck of the South African Republic. Unqualified credence was given to the story, which became absolute when the captain of the *Dorothy* published a letter in the Natal journals. He did not commit himself to an emphatic statement that gold formed part of the cargo of his ship, but he admitted that just on the eve of his sailing from Delagoa Bay certain persons brought on board heavy boxes and obtained leave to store them under circumstances harmonising with the popular belief. Several attempts were made by hastily formed syndicates to recover the treasure, but, owing to the perennial heavy

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surf running at the spot where the vessel grounded, the divers could not work.

Among those who accepted the story as a fact was the Natal Government. A sum of money was granted, and a Government salvage tug lent for the purpose of testing the story, but the sequel was the old familiar one that has ever attached to treasure hunting in South Africa.

The departure of Paul Kruger for Europe gave rise to many rumours and suggestions whose absurd groundlessness time has thoroughly exposed; but it is safe to say that for several years after that entirely misunderstood and misrepresented event, it was widely believed that he had both carried away and concealed vast sums in coin and bar gold. The *Dorothy* yarn was universally accepted because it represented a phase of popular faith, based on the wish being father to the thought. The practical jokers who originated the stories reckoned on two factors: the gullibility of the public both at home and abroad, and popular ignorance of the financial affairs of the tottering Transvaal Government at the time when millions in specie were supposed to be in the possession of the Kruger Executive.

It is a matter of knowledge to-day that at the period of Kruger's departure the Government was at its wits' ends to raise cash for the immediate needs of the war. Believing as they did that success was inevitable, the Executive had spent money lavishly. A horde of German and Hollander mercenaries took care of that. More than one alien officer refused to raise a hand until he had received not only past but prospective pay, and paper in any form he barred. It is no extravagance of language to say that for a year before the final act the Government was scraping in every piece of gold that could be got hold of. Not content with seizing every available gold reserve of the mines, it actually resorted

to the expedient of steaming the plates over which the crushed ore passes. The amount thus obtained in several cases did not exceed five pounds in value. It is scarcely probable that even Kruger's best friends in the Executive would have permitted him to leave with practically all the plunder.

To those who know Boer characteristics, the theory that vast quantities of bar gold were taken out into the veld and buried is childish in the extreme. The Boer is not disposed to allow his valuables far out of his sight. The same spirit which prompted old Bezuidenhout to visit his bankers every Saturday and withdraw his money, lest thieves should break in while the staff was at church, would prevent the Boer officials from carrying gold into the veld for safety so long as there was a hole within sight of the stoep.

That this is a Boer idiosyncrasy was proved in numerous cases after the war, when Boers returning from their exile in St. Helena or Ceylon went straight to their cattle kraal, the ant-hill oven behind the house, or some very adjacent portion of the homestead, and produced the parcels of cash they had concealed before starting on commando.

This propensity for having the bank under observation was daringly illustrated in the case of an old Boer in the Potchefstroom district. He had made some hundreds of pounds by the sale of a small part of his land to a mining company. He was very much under the thumb of his vrouw, his second wife, with a large, ready-made family, who, being grown up, and more than usually lazy and impecunious, used the stepfather as a financial reserve, until he kicked and pleaded semi-bankruptcy. When reminded of the twelve hundred sovereigns he had received from the mining people, he declared that it had gone in the payment of old debts; but the sceptical stepsons, assisted by their mother, made a point of ransacking the

who professed to have the slightest clue to the whereabouts of the Kruger millions had no difficulty in inducing someone to advance the capital wanted for equipping a search party. Perhaps the most surprising case of credulity among scores was the following, which the writers can vouch for, having been consulted afterwards by the victim as to the advisability of "taking further action."

A young Boer residing in one of the only districts in which the Kruger millions were buried called upon a medical man attached to one of the Rand mines, and told him a story. He had been, he said, riding to his farm after dark when he saw lights moving in a wooded kloof, or gully. Reconnoitring carefully, he got near enough to see a party of Boers digging holes and carrying small but apparently very heavy boxes from a wagon. Seeing no Kaffir servants, he justly surmised that the business must be of a profoundly important nature to induce Boers to dig holes and carry heavy weights themselves; so, his curiosity being excited, he lingered on in hiding to solve the greatest puzzle of his life—why Boers were working.

When the party had gone he went to the spot, carefully marked it, and, returning next day with digging implements—and, of course, a Kaffir to use them—unearthed a box containing blocks of gold and Kruger sovereigns minted on one side only. In support of his story he showed three of these "half-sovereigns," and asked the doctor to advance him £50 for the hire of a wagon, tools and other necessities that he might bring in the treasure.

At the risk of being suspected of wild romancing, we assert that the doctor advanced the money within an hour, and hurried the young Boer off without waiting to ask for any further details beyond the very natural question, "Why did you not take the sovereigns, or, at least, sufficient to render you independent of my assistance?"

The reply was plausible, and completely disarmed any suspicion the doctor may have had: "What would be the

good of half-finished sovereigns like these to me? And suppose I had been found with them on me?"

When several weeks had passed without bringing Boer, bar or half-minted gold, the doctor began to exercise belated caution and make inquiries.

When someone pointed out that the blank on the sovereigns had been very unskillfully produced by filing away Kruger's effigy, the doctor presented one of the coins to the observant friend, with an earnest appeal for his perpetual silence on the subject. Needless to say, the invariable happened, for a secret that is shared by two ceases to be a secret.

A tremendous impulse was given to the rate at which the Kruger treasure rumour travelled by the publication of the fact that the British authorities in Johannesburg had made an agreement with one of the possessors of the secret by which he was to be supplied with a police guard and the necessary equipment, and receive one-third of all recovered treasure. How many new treasure-buriers interviewed the authorities on the strength of this announcement we know not, but we do know that private expeditions were organised galore. One wily owner of certain unworked gold claims took advantage of the mania to get his ground partially prospected free of charge. A paragraph appeared in the local paper suggesting that there was good reason for believing that the Kruger gold lay beneath the surface at a certain spot. Next day three parties were at work with gangs of Kaffirs turning up the ground, and within a week, if a gold reef had existed on the property, it would have been exposed all along its course, to the benefit of the claim owner, who had evidently read Mark Twain's "Tom Sawyer" to good account.

About twenty years ago a rumour went round that payable gold had been discovered near the surface on a spot at the foot of Table Mountain. There was a rush of diggers, who toiled long enough to clear out the entire

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stock of the only store-keeper within a mile. When they retired, so did he, the only member of the crowd who had found gold, and in its most convenient form—minted. A year or two later he attempted the business in another district, but, being recognised, the crowd looted or destroyed his stock instead of purchasing it.

The claim owner who is supposed to have started the Kruger gold rumour near Krugersdorp was, oddly enough, one of the diggers on the Table Mountain gold field.

Among the many claimants to participation in the resurrection of the Kruger millions was Ludwig von Veltheim, whose sensational career in Johannesburg, and trial and conviction in London in 1908, made considerable stir. The claim was made on his behalf in an American paper, in 1906, by a lady described as Madame Marie von Veltheim, an Englishwoman by birth, who married that interesting soldier of fortune.

The lady's narrative is exceptional, not for the reason that it supplies any clue, but because it is the only one that has named persons other than the narrator as having shared the secret. Unfortunately, Jan Potgieter and Peter Smuts have an army of namesakes. However, the story is sufficiently unconventional and von Veltheim-like to justify the belief that he was its author. After telling the story of von Veltheim's Johannesburg adventure, the lady proceeds :

"Hostilities began between the Boers and the British, and my husband joined the Boer army. He had command of a company as captain, and took part in many engagements until, after all, he won Kruger's confidence.

"Well, everybody knows that, fight as they might, the little handful of Boers couldn't hold out against the overwhelming numbers of the British. Lord Roberts took Pretoria, and Kruger and his friends had to flee. But before he went he entrusted the little capital of the

Republic—about £1,000,000—to my husband and three other men. One was Jan Potgieter, and another was Peter Smuts, and the third I do not know.

"This was just before the British occupation. These four men took the money—it was all in freshly-minted gold—put it into chests, and loaded the chests on carts. These they took up into the mountains in the dead of a dark night, and buried it carefully, far from places where men might go.

"They were careful, too, not to bury it all in one spot. Four different *caches* were made, and the bearings accurately taken. My husband, later, felt far from satisfied with one of the places, and went out alone one night to change it. It was a difficult task alone, he told me afterwards, because the gold was so heavy. But he eventually succeeded in transferring it all by himself.

"Now, we have all heard how John Kemp last year found one *cache*. I have no doubt that it was one of the four which my husband helped to make. But the other three are still safe and untouched, so far as I know.

"He made a chart of all the land about where the gold was hidden. Of this he took a copy, sealed them both, and awaited developments. In 1901 Lord Roberts deported Mr. von Veltheim to London, where my husband asked to be sent, as I was there.

"I had taken up miniature painting, and was quite successful. I had painted the King and the Connaughts and others of the Royal set. Of course, this brought me considerable money. When my husband arrived in London he found no one to turn to but myself. He couldn't get anything to do, and he made up his mind that England was no place for him. I had some £800 to spare, which I gave to him, and I saw him off to South Africa in September, 1902. He had to go secretly, and before he went he told me the secret of the buried gold. And he gave me an exact copy of the chart which he had

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made, showing the situation of the four *caches*, one of which has since been found. He told me, too, not to expect to hear anything from him after he left Alexandria, because he expected to sink his identity.

"‘But in nine months, or a year,’ he went on, ‘you ought to expect to get a word from me. If you don’t, wait four years, and then use the chart yourself. Or, if you get word of my death before that, try to recover the gold for yourself and the boy.’

"Four years passed without Madame von Veltheim receiving any news of her husband. Then she received indirect news that he had been seen by someone, and though she has not been able to discover his whereabouts, she has gone to New York to search for him. If she receives conclusive proof that he is no longer alive, she may go to South Africa and secure the treasure. On one point, however, she is determined not to waver—she will under no circumstances give away her secret."

Probably no Government was ever so keen on purchasing information and so frequently hoodwinked and fooled as that of the Transvaal in the matter of the arms supposed to have been concealed by the Reformers when the affair of the Jameson Raid ended in fiasco. In response to the demand of the Pretorian authorities, a large number of Lee-Metford rifles and ammunition, with several Maxim guns, were surrendered by the leaders of the "Revolution," but the Government refused to accept the assurance that they represented all that had been imported. For months those supposititious hidden arms were the subject of hourly discussion in Johannesburg. The man who on such occasions poses as one who knows was largely in evidence in bars and places where gossip has its fling, and one or two of them had cause to regret the vanity which induced them to play the part of persons of consequence. They became subjects of particularly disagreeable police attention, were

shadowed, interrogated, and even arrested, one man being actually detained in the lunatic asylum at Pretoria under aggravating conditions, by way of forcing from him information which he protested he did not possess.

One can hardly blame the Government for taking drastic action, for it had been victimised outrageously by men who professed to have the information sought. Money was distributed lavishly, one man succeeding in wheedling about two thousand pounds out of the son of Paul Kruger, Tjaard, who had been made chief of the Secret Service. It was common to meet men who boasted that they had taken in the Government by fairy tales, and, as they often supported their boasting by an unwonted display of ready cash, it is probable that this part of their gasconading had a basis of fact.

One mine especially was suspected to be the hiding-place of the bulk of the unaccounted-for arms, and the detectives practically lived upon the property for months. There was not an employee who was not approached with offers of reward or punishment, and a small coterie of them made a handsome haul out of a credulous official by filling him with imaginary details of strange happenings said to have occurred at the mine. They were careful not to claim association with them, but posed as Boer sympathisers who had been suspected as such by the mine manager, and were sent away on various pretexts when it was to be inferred the illicit arms were brought down the workings. The fraud proved highly profitable to them, but disastrous to their employers, for the mine was taken possession of by the police, work stopped, and considerable damage done to the property by the reckless excavations and tearing down of structures. A member of the detective force in a position to know told the authors that the search for the unaccounted-for arms cost from first to last nearly thirty thousand

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pounds. At any rate, that sum was paid out to the chief and officials of the department entrusted with the search.

While the search for the arms was a subject of public discussion, there was prospecting on the West Rand a once well-known mining character—a rough diamond of the old mining camp type whose violent anti-Boer views would oftener have landed him in trouble than they did had he not been a physical giant. One night, following a not infrequent custom, after “making a night of it” in the Krugersdorp canteens, he found it more convenient to sleep out than go to his camp. Waking in the grey dawn he found himself in the back premises of a private house of somewhat rambling structure, and in seeking an exit detected beneath a heap of straw in a locked but tumble-down outhouse the breech of some sort of small cannon. Immediately he realised that he had come upon one of the much-sought-for Jameson guns. His ardent loyalty to a lost cause inspired him with a determination to remove the weapon to a safer hiding-place. With much toil and care he took off the door, got access to the outhouse, and uncovered two small three-pounder guns, obviously new and unused. Within a few minutes they were lying at the bottom of the sixty-foot well in the yard, and the gratified prospector finished his sleep in the porch of the Dutch Reformed Church while awaiting the opening of the canteens.

Next morning there was much hurrying to and fro of Government officials. Sarel Eloff, the grandson of President Kruger, was then Chief of Police at Krugersdorp, and responsible for two three-pounder guns that had been sent from Pretoria a few days before for the use of the newly formed volunteer corps. Pending their handing over to the corps, they had been stored in an outhouse on the premises of Judicial Commissioner Bodenstein, but when the kitchen boy entered the yard

he was startled to find the door of the shed off its hinges and the guns missing!

There is a widespread delusion that the South African Boer is a Dutchman by descent, and possesses much of that stolid impassivity we have somehow got into the habit of regarding as a leading Dutch characteristic. The fact that French blood runs in the veins of the majority was amply proved when the officials and burghers realised the nature of the loss. Half of them gave exhibitions of what Mark Twain described as a French calm, the remainder leant against the wall and tried to think which of the Rooineks in the dorp was most likely to have committed the sacrilege.

Meanwhile the Chief of Police and Chief Magistrate were having an excited discussion as to whose duty it was to proceed to Pretoria and face Oom Paul with the awful news. When argument was exhausted, the pair resorted to the hazard of a tossed coin, which only prolonged the discussion by introducing fresh controversial matter, the question at issue being whether when Eloff cried "woman" he really meant "tails," there being no female figure on Kruger coins. The debate ended in a compromise. Both went to Pretoria, and it is said that the pair loitered just out of sight of the Presidency for half an hour before deciding who should enter first.

What occurred at the interview with the old gentleman is only a matter of rumour. We in Krugersdorp formed certain opinions when we noticed that the Judicial Commissioner countermanded the invitations to the christening of his baby at which the leading local Britishers would have been present. A little later we had a new Chief of Police.

The customary crop of claimants for the honour of having removed the guns came up luxuriantly. The genuine hero would stand and listen, only asking a

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question now and then when the liar introduced fresh embellishments of detail. For some weeks he bore patiently the pangs of seeing another acclaimed a hero, then nature and whisky asserted themselves and he threw restraint overboard.

"Then it's quite true that you collared those guns and know where they are?" he demanded, with a suppressed ferocity betokening trouble.

The impostor calmly reiterated his claim.

"Then you shall come to the police station and tell where they are. Do you know they were not Maxims at all, but guns to be used in the campaign against Magato by the Krugersdorp commando? You're in the pay of a Kaffir chief, you scoundrel; come and own up before I smash you."

The smashing began instantly, and would have been continued had not the impostor been a good sprinter.

A few days later the police got an anonymous hint that an inspection of the well in the yard of the Judicial Commissioner might be informative; and they acted upon it.

CHAPTER XI

THE STRANGE STORY OF THE THIRD RAAD

Composition of the Third Raad—Who Supplied the Brains of the Confederacy?—Judicial Condonation of Third Raad Methods—The Audacious Cold-Storage Scheme—A Church Committee used as a Pawn—The Nylstroom Farm Purchase—Nothing too Small for a Tribute—Third Raad Not Guilty on Some Counts—The Employment of Burglars in Purchasing Gold Properties—Forgery a Business—Photographic Evidence of a Previous Conviction—How Kruger became a Great Landowner

SINCE the British public have been educated into the meaning of that system of State exploitation known as "graft" in the country of its cultivation and development—the United States—it is easier to tell the story of the "Third Raad," which during the greater part of the Kruger regime was all-powerful in Pretoria.

The ground has been prepared by the revelations of American public plundering, and the authors feel that they can tell stories which but for this educational process would either have been omitted or toned down to ensure acceptance.

The government of the Transvaal was carried on by two elected Houses of Representatives. The First Raad was the place of inception and control of all legislation; it combined in itself all the powers and privileges of the British House of Commons and an unreformed House of Lords. The Second Raad was purely a nominal revising body with full right of criticism and advice, but no power to enforce its will or judgment.

The Third Raad was the name given to a small but immensely influential coterie of private individuals in intimate relationship with Paul Kruger and the members

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of the Executive Government. They had no official status—were not even members of either chamber of the Legislature—but acted as self-appointed intermediaries between the Executive and such individuals as desired to approach them on business. They filled the part of the favourites who surrounded some of the more corrupt monarchs of Europe, or more nearly those doorkeepers of Oriental palaces who levied toll on all who sought to approach the royal presence.

For nearly twenty years, and right up to the end of the Boer Government, it was impossible for any concession or piece of legislation likely to bring profit to others to pass through the Raad unless the members of this gang of plunderers were ensured a liberal share in the enterprise, such share invariably taking the form of part cash in advance.

The active members of this secret organisation were well known to the public, and there were some dozen of them, and one of them was a much-abused and talked-of Colonial of Irish parentage, who carried on business in Pretoria as baker and confectioner. All these men were old friends and intimates of Paul Kruger, and, it is worthy of remark, judged by European standards, both illiterate and unintellectual, but all possessing in a marked degree that cunning and capacity for trickiness which is described by the Boer word "slim."

It has been suggested with some show of justification that the brains of the confederacy were supplied by an ex-official, a lawyer who kept well in the background. Certainly many of the plots and plans of the gang were conceived and executed in a manner so astute and masterly that it is difficult to imagine them originating with these dull-witted Boers who had no business training, were children in the affairs of the commercial world, and only a few years before had to have the uses and advantages of a bank explained to them before they

would surrender the lifelong habit of hiding their money in the cattle kraal or under the bed.

A story told of the Irish-Colonial illustrates the simplicity of a man who, within a year or two, was controlling hundreds of thousands of pounds, and keeping the representatives of millionaires waiting in his shop until he was pleased to grant them an audience. It was the occasion of his first visit to Europe on behalf of the Third Raad, and as the negotiator in schemes involving a quarter of a million. He travelled first class, but astonished the steward by handing over to him a sack containing biltong and Boer biscuit for his sustenance during the voyage; the same precautionary measure he took when journeying by ox-wagon through the Transvaal.

It has been urged by no less an authority than a judge of the High Court of the Transvaal that the Third Raad was, after all, merely an organised institution of a type familiar to and recognised in most civilised countries; that its members performed useful functions in facilitating the progress of negotiations between individuals and the Executive Government, and were entitled to a reward for their services. He also added that if any blame attached to anyone in the matter it was to those who tempted by offering bribes to persons in a position to be useful.

We are not concerned with discussing the morals and ethics of the Third Raad; we are even prepared to concede that in many instances that institution did facilitate the passing into law of enactments beneficial to others than the immediate promoters. It is also a fact that something very much like the Third Raad may be met with in the lobbies of European Houses of Parliament; but the more serious charges against the Pretorian gang relate to instances in which their efforts were directed solely to their own enrichment.

An illustrative and leading case is that known to history as the Cold Storage Scandal, probably one of the most impudent pieces of jobbery ever attempted, even by the Third Raad. Several schemes for introducing the cold-storage system to the Transvaal were being publicly discussed. Among them was one proposed by a leading and responsible firm who offered to start the business under a very easy concession, and deposit a substantial guarantee that they would proceed with the work. The Third Raad approached the promoters, after waiting for them to open overtures in the manner of most other concession seekers, but were told their services would not be required. They promptly decided to embark in the business on their own account. Within a month the Raad had been persuaded to grant a concession for the installation of a cold-storage system anywhere in the Transvaal; to lend the concessionaires £80,000 at 3 per cent.; and to grant, free of cost, any piece of Government land suitable for the erection of the storage.

Certain members of the Executive had been impressed by the offer of the other people to deposit a guarantee for the fulfilment of the conditions of the concession, and suggested that the Third Raad should do likewise. Will it be believed that the member we have before referred to coolly asked the Government to lend the money required to be deposited with the State Treasurer as security for the £80,000 already promised? This was too much even for the pliable Executive, and the impudent request was refused. Within a few days an ingenious way out of the difficulty was found. It was then proposed that £10,000 of the £80,000 to be advanced should be left as security, the concessionaires drawing only £70,000. To this the Government agreed.

With the £70,000 so easily obtained the Third Raad set to work, not on the cold-storage scheme—for, by

some convenient accident, no time limit was given in the concession agreement—but in the furtherance of certain private schemes which had been hung up through need of ready money.

Months passed, but nothing was heard of the cold-storage except the stinging comments of the *Johannesburg Critic* (a weekly journal on the lines of *Truth*), which was responsible for the exposure of many a Government scandal. At last the Irish-Colonial left for England to purchase plant. He made a triumphant tour of Ireland—seeing the land of his origin for the first time—and was interviewed, puffed and pictured as Kruger's chief adviser. For once an enthusiastic and partisan Press did not overstate the case. The laudations of the gentleman were fully borne out and justified by facts. Being well supplied with money, he reciprocated by subscribing liberally to various purely Irish causes, and doubtless made an excellent impression and popularised Paul Kruger and the Boer Transvaal with the leaders of the extreme Irish party. A year or two later he had to act as patron and nurse to dozens of Irishmen who emigrated to the Transvaal on the strength of their faith in his promises to give his countrymen a start in the new land. In many cases he carried out his engagements and reaped his reward in the ingratitude that too often is the guerdon of the benefactor.

On his return the long-expected cold storage buildings were begun. The contractor for the supply of every article needed was the same Irish-Colonial, who had managed to get the Government to advance £70,000 on the project; while his personal friends, including several of his imported Irishmen, were given fat sub-contracts. Needless to add that the business proved a frost from the beginning, and that the Government never saw its £70,000 again.

Another interesting example of the ingenious methods

of the Third Raad was supplied in the case of the Nylstroom farm swindle.

An enterprising Johannesburg wholesale grocer was desirous of acquiring a certain 6,000-acre farm in the Nylstroom district which was suitable for the cultivation of tea and coffee. It was a *bona fide* business, and the grocer was prepared to pay a good price. The Third Raad heard of it, as the members generally did hear of possible sources of profit. It happened that the farm was Government land, and in the ordinary course would not have been easily obtained; but the gang understood the art of clearing away difficulties. The Transvaal Government has always been very liberal in its grants of land to religious bodies, particularly the Dutch Reformed and Dopper Church, and any request from a church committee was certain of a hearing from Paul Kruger. Acting on this, the gang approached such a body, and came to terms with them. The committee were to ask the Government to make them a grant of this farm for church purposes. Having obtained it, they were to discover that a particular piece of building land in Pretoria would be more desirable, and they were to exchange the farm for it. The plan was carried out. The Nylstroom farm of 6,000 acres was granted to the church; a member of the Third Raad purchased the building plot for £50, and transferred it to the church committee in exchange for the farm. The grocer paid £3,500 for the farm, all of which, less £50, was divided among the conspirators.

The success of this plot whetted the appetites of the gang, and a plan was devised for squeezing more juice from the orange. The new owner spent about a thousand pounds in preparing the land for tea and coffee, when a member of the First Raad—who had been admitted into the swindle—pretended to discover two things: first, that the President had exceeded his authority in giving away this farm; secondly, that the cultivation of tea and coffee

was a business that the Government should take up in the interest of the burghers.

Paul Kruger was converted. He admitted that he had committed a wrong to the country, that could be best atoned for by repurchasing the farm, with its prospective tea and coffee crop. Negotiations were opened with the grocer, who strongly objected to part with a property which was going to make him a millionaire; but, in consideration of the welfare of the State, he consented to accept £60,000 for the farm.

That sum was paid to him through the Third Raad. How much of it found its way to his bankers we do not profess to know, but it is a matter of common knowledge that three members of the Third Raad shortly afterwards began the erection of magnificent private residences at Sunnyside, the aristocratic quarter of Pretoria.

Dealing in concessions was the principal business of the Third Raad, though nothing was too insignificant for their consideration. The writer, when proprietor of the *Transvaal Sentinel*, found it absolutely essential to enlist the aid of this mighty organisation in collecting his quarterly account for official advertisements, paying a regular lump sum of £10 by way of commission.

Once and once only he ventured to dispense with the cumbrous aid; but soon found out his mistake. Again and again was his account sent back by the Government for explanation and amendment, in spite of the fact that the letter of the agreement had been strictly observed. All sorts of ridiculous objections were urged as an excuse for non-payment: the size of the type was too large or too small; the voucher copies of the paper containing the advertisements had not been sent, or, if sent, had gone to the wrong department. When every objection had been conclusively answered and shown to be groundless, the audacious excuse was proffered that the negotiations and explanations had taken so long that the fund for settling

those particular advertisements was exhausted, and could only be replenished the following year.

That account still remains unpaid. Next month the Third Raad graciously agreed to resume the collection of accounts; but the bonus was raised to £15.

On the day that we made peace with the Third Raad the gentleman who figured so prominently in the cold-storage plot left a private meeting of his gang, discussing a £5,000 project, to accompany us to the Government office, where within ten minutes a cheque for the new account was produced. The agent pocketed £15, and returned to his colleagues to share out. And it may be placed on record, to the credit of the members of the Third Raad, that though they debated strongly at times over the division of the spoil, they always shared fairly and promptly. They went all together to the bank to cash cheques, and divided the proceeds before leaving the premises.

A leading feature of most of the business in which the Third Raad insisted on taking a hand was that it was always represented as being for the good of the State, like the acquisition of the Nylstroom property as a Government experimental farm for the instruction of the burghers in the cultivation of tea and coffee.

About 1894-5 there was a boom in tree planting in the Johannesburg district. An enterprising seedsman advertised largely, showing that huge fortunes might be made by planting the Australian blue gum, or eucalyptus, a marvellously quick-growing tree, that would command a big price as a prop for mining purposes. Thousands of acres were planted, and though the eucalyptus proved useless for its intended purpose, it justified its existence by serving as a screen against the dust, which was the principal plague of the Rand, and beautified the suburbs. Financially, the tree was a disastrous failure.

The Third Raad, always quick to recognise an oppor-

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tunity for money making, put up nominees, such as church and school committees, to apply for grants of Government land for tree planting. A few acres of seedlings would be put in growing trim; then a confederate member of the First Raad would rise in his place and complain that the Government had wronged the State by giving away land which had produced, in other hands, a valuable crop of trees. Another confederate would follow, and move that the land be repurchased, a resolution carried without a dissentient on six separate occasions. In every case the price paid was outrageously disproportionate to real value.

Concessions were always popular with Paul Kruger and his Executive, because they cost nothing to give and were a certain source of profit. They were always recommended and excused on the score that they encouraged local industry and enterprise, and this in defiance of the fact that in very few cases were the protected articles manufactured in the country. Matches, paint, ornamental building stoneware, certain spirits, explosives, were all imported ready manufactured, though a pretence of producing them on the spot was gone through in the case of explosives, matches and stonework. The President was always eloquent on this phase of the matter; to the purely commercial and financial aspects he affected to be indifferent. He granted the concession, he said, not to put money into the pockets of a few individuals, but to encourage and benefit his burghers. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the injury done to such of the burghers as worked, by giving the monopoly of brickmaking to one firm. It was the hardships brought about through the brick concession that first directed the attention of Paul Kruger to the infamy of the concession system. When the Executive began to exercise a little less liberality in the granting of monopolies, the Third Raad found its services more needful; therefore, worth much more. They

had to bring influence to bear upon more persons than the President and one or two members of the Executive. It was necessary to secure the support of individual members of the First Raad; and as the price of everything, including patriotism, had gone up by leaps and bounds during the fat years of corruption, the engineering of a concession became a serious and expensive matter.

In one or two exposed scandals the fact had come out that private members of the Raad had taken bribes to vote for certain things without the knowledge of the Third Raad. Steps were at once taken to ensure that there should be no underhand work of this kind in future. Any member who was approached by persons seeking favours from the Legislature must refer the applicant to the agent acting for the Third Raad. If not, then he would be exposed.

One or two members disregarded the warning, and the country was amused by the spectacle of certain of the most notoriously open traffickers in bribes denouncing others for allowing themselves to be corrupted. But the discipline proved deterrent. Within a very short time all business was done through the Third Raad, who became bribery agents by special appointment to the Transvaal Legislature.

Not unnaturally, the gang got credit for having a hand in many shady transactions in which it had no part; not, perhaps, because of disinclination, but from want of opportunity. In fairness, it ought to be said that the members of the Third Raad had no share in the two or three infamous cases in which the courts of justice were made tools of interested and wealthy litigants. We can also vouch for the fact that no member of the party had a share in that series of frauds of which the following case is a sample:

A Boer on the East Rand owned a farm contiguous to a promising gold mine. The directors had reason to believe that the richest portion of their reef ran into the

adjacent farm, and, through an agent, opened negotiations for the purchase of the property. This fact came to the knowledge of a person we may call Smith, because he was a Britisher. He, having the ear of the Boer more than the representative of the mining company, found less difficulty in getting his proposals listened to; but the owner, Boer-like, asked the prohibitive figure of fifty thousand pounds, though later events have shown that three times that sum was nearer the actual value of the farm.

Smith haggled for a time; then, one day turned up at the farm with £500 in gold and an agreement. The cash was payment for a three months' option to purchase the farm for £45,000. Few Boers of the old school could resist the sight of five hundred sovereigns, and this one was no exception. He took the money and signed the option agreement.

Two months later he was astounded by receiving from Smith a letter to the following effect: "In accordance with the terms of our agreement, I tender herewith fifteen thousand pounds, the price of your farm, and will take possession immediately."

The startled Boer went into Johannesburg, and explained that a great mistake had been made; that the agreed price was £45,000, not £15,000. Mr. Smith, equally surprised, produced his copy of the agreement, duly signed by the Boer and witnessed by a neighbour, who had not been made acquainted with its contents. The amount written there was plainly £15,000.

"Where is your copy?" Smith asked.

"I could not find it before I came away, and, being in a hurry to see you, could not wait."

"You must get it at once, for I tell you I mean to act promptly. If you do not give me possession of the farm I shall sue you, and I have a wealthy mining company behind me who can, and will, spend thousands in getting their rights"; in which Smith spoke the truth.

The Boer returned home, and sought high and low for his copy of the agreement. He failed to find it, for the very good reason that, at the instigation of Mr. Smith, a skilled cracksman—now serving a long term in Johannesburg jail—had entered the farmhouse and brought away the original and genuine agreement.

Smith's alleged copy shown to the Boer was a specially prepared bogus document.

In the absence of documentary evidence and the presence of the forgery, the Boer could do nothing, as his lawyer told him. He accepted the £15,000, gave possession, and Smith sold out for £50,000 to the company whose property adjoined.

Smith is a rich and influential man to-day.

The facts of this and several similar cases were given to one of the authors by the man employed to steal the original agreement. In the ordinary case, any such assurance coming from a convicted criminal would naturally be received with caution, unless very strongly corroborated. Ample verification of the story exists. We were engaged some months in preparing the case for the swindled Boer, he having decided to fight on the strength of his own knowledge of the facts and our report that the supposed signatures on the agreement produced by Smith were forgeries. The case, however, never got as far as the issue of the writ, as our legal advisers pointed out that we should have no chance against the unlimited resources of the wealthy company for whom Smith acted. The burglar offered to go into the witness-box, if convicted on a charge then pending against him. Unfortunately, he was acquitted, and, as he put it, it would not pay him to quarrel with those who retained him for similar services.

It is interesting to note that the cost of his defence in the case in which he was involved came to over £1,000. He was charged with highway robbery, and the defence was an alibi. Witnesses were brought in dozens from

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every part of South Africa to prove they were in his company in Johannesburg at the time when, according to the prosecution, he was fifty miles away, lying in the veld awaiting the coming of his victim, the secretary of a mine, carrying the month's wages.

"I never set eyes on half those witnesses till I saw them in the witness-box," he assured us.

"And who paid for them?" we inquired.

"I can only tell you I did not," was the suggestive answer.

On the strength of our inquiries, we have no hesitation in saying that frauds of the character of that described were not at all uncommon on the Rand; that a person was retained and paid handsomely for preparing forged agreements to be used in such cases.

One of the authors, who acted as handwriting expert to the Public Prosecutor's department, was on two occasions approached by persons and asked his terms for copying certain signatures. The proposals were made in the most matter-of-fact and businesslike manner and with no preparatory binding to secrecy.

When told in pretty plain language the author's opinion of the proposal and the proposer, the man coolly, and in apparent good faith, remarked:

"I thought that [forgery] was your business. Never mind, I dare say I can find someone else who will be glad of the job."

On another occasion a "Peruvian" illicit liquor dealer, then in a small way, but later a "king," called on the writer and, producing a filled-in bill of exchange and a blank, calmly asked what would be the charge for copying the signature on the bill and transferring it to the blank.

"That all depends upon how much you fill in the bill for," we replied, by way of keeping the joke going.

"I can't tell you that; that's my business."

He proceeded to haggle. We, with a serious face,

quoted our terms: £1,000 down, and £200 per month during our stay in prison.

The "Peruvian" shook his head.

"Too much. Why, I shall only make fifty pounds myself. Besides, if you can't do the thing good enough to keep out of trouble, I don't think much of you."

We only once were honoured by a retainer on behalf of the Third Raad. A number of anonymous letters were handed us with the object of tracing the writer. They had been sent to a leading member of the gang, and, amid much vulgar abuse and extravagant threats of vengeance, referred to certain transactions in which the recipient of the missives had been engaged, and had failed to recognise the adage, "Honour among thieves."

We were, of course, not in a position to gauge the truth or otherwise of the allegations; but, so far as they could be checked by facts already within our knowledge, the writer had good cause for his reproaches. Among other things, it was plainly suggested that a bogus action had been brought by connivance against a member of the Third Raad, the object being to get such a verdict as would clear the party sued of a grave imputation on his fiduciary character, and thereby frighten off by anticipation another person who was meditating a genuine action.

The letters revealed an amount of double cunning and clever scoundrelism that, if used by a novelist upon one of his characters, would provoke a cry of "too far-fetched."

As before remarked, the ability displayed in the manipulation of the plots and plans of the Third Raad argued the existence of a brain-power behind the scenes that belonged to the members only by purchase.

An amusing example of the audacious lengths to which certain members of the gang would go in furthering their ends is the following:

There was in Pretoria a colonial who on several occa-

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sions had exposed or spoiled some of the best-laid schemes of the Third Raad. He was a man of some character and stood well with the Kerk. There was, however, a suggestion that he had, some years before, got into trouble in the Cape Colony, and served a short sentence in jail. The jail records were searched in vain, for it happened that the man had been convicted under an alias.

One night he was passing down a badly-lighted street on the way home when he was pounced upon by two detectives, accused of having purchased liquor and sold it to a native, and, in spite of protests and appeals, was taken to the police-station, where he was locked up in a private room, provided with a bed. He naturally slept very little, and remarked that one of the detectives came into the room several times, and was persistent in suggesting that he should undress. This he refused to do. Very early in the morning he was called out into the station yard, taken to a large water-tub, and told to wash. He gladly availed himself of the opportunity of refreshing himself, and removed coat, waistcoat and shirt. While leaning over the tub he was suddenly dashed with water, a Kaffir carrying two buckets having apparently tripped over the garments lying on the ground, and drenched them and the trousers the prisoner was wearing.

The detective abused the Kaffir, apologised profusely, and took his victim to a room, telling him that his clothes would be dried for him. "Meanwhile," said the detective, "put on these; no one will see you." "These" were ordinary prison clothes.

The prisoner hesitated, but, rather than stand about naked, complied.

"Just walk across the yard to that cell; someone is coming in here," said the detective in most friendly manner; and he led the way.

An hour or two later he was released, with apologies and explanations and hints of compensation. The detec-

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tive had made a mistake; exposure would ruin him; silence was the best policy, and so on.

Very foolishly, the unfortunate prisoner agreed to let the matter pass into oblivion.

A month or so later he learned that there were in the possession of certain persons connected with the Third Raad photographs of himself in prison dress, which, if necessary, would be produced to prove the truth of the rumour that he had been a convict!

Considering how well informed the members of the Third Raad were on every matter, actual and prospective, in which the Rand Legislature had a voice, it is reasonable to believe that the members took advantage as often as possible of the opportunity to "get in at the ground floor." For one case we know of, there were probably twenty of which no provable evidence exists.

There was one matter, however, in which the gang not only got in first, but gave a lead to Paul Kruger, which resulted in making him and his family probably the largest landowners in the world. This master-stroke was brought about in the following way:

Under the old law, every burgher on attaining the age of eighteen had the right to select a 6,000-acre farm anywhere in the Transvaal. It became clear, even to the least far-sighted member of the Government, that at the normal rate of increase in the population there would soon be no farms left to give out, and the matter was privately discussed among the inner set, who agreed, or pretended to agree, that very soon no more free farms could be given. In the meantime certain members of the Third Raad designed an ingenious expedient, which was kept secret until it should become law. It was arranged that all rights that had not been exercised since 1875 should be recognised, not by awarding a 6,000-acre farm, but, after assessing each case on its merits, a building plot in a town or some other lesser compensation would be

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granted. The necessary besluit, or law, to carry this plan into force having been drawn up and secretly agreed to, it was pigeon-holed, while the agents of the Third Raad proceeded to sow the seed that was to produce a rich harvest in the shortest possible time.

Two or three of the members who carried most weight with the Boers made a tour of the country, visiting every farmer having a son entitled to burgher right, and in the most casual manner mentioned that the right to a farm would cease to exist—in fact, had ceased. In hundreds of cases the right had not been exercised owing to the farmer already possessing two farms, one in the high veld for summer pasturage, one in the low veld for winter occupation. In as many more instances the young burgher had not put in his claim because he was not married and had not left the parental roof.

Having satisfied the farmer that his son's right was now worthless, the visitor would suggest, in a manner implying no great personal faith, that some sort of compensation might be made, and generally finished by getting the burgher-right transferred to himself or one of his nominees for a trifling consideration.

And now comes the harvest. The carefully prepared besluit was sprung upon the Raad, and passed with little difficulty, the President making its necessity clear by giving a few figures showing that the supply of Government land was well-nigh exhausted.

A committee was hastily formed to consider the claims put in, and assess them on their merits.

The rights acquired by the Third Raad on behalf of itself and President Kruger were in almost every case considered entitled to the grant of a full 6,000-acre farm; in others, a valuable piece of building land in Pretoria, or some other rising town, was given. The rank and file of the burghers had to be content with, at most, a very small piece of building land.

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In this way Paul Kruger and his family became possessed of over a quarter of a million acres, for which an average of £5 per farm of 6,000 acres was paid. They were transferred to himself in a few cases, but the majority were in the names of his relations, among whom his son-in-law, Frickkie Eloff, did remarkably well.

Of the members of the Third Raad, it is superfluous to say more than that they missed no opportunities afforded by this "deal."

The story of the Third Raad has one feature that partly atones for its sordid infamy. Only one of its members succeeded in retaining the proceeds of his planning and scheming, and he, mainly by virtue of his enormous land-owning, is still a wealthy man; but other survivors are no longer able to command thousands.

On the other hand it is, perhaps, from the ethical point of view, regrettable that in most instances the persons and corporations who secured their positions by bribing the Third Raad are nearly all flourishing, and show no signs of decadence.

CHAPTER XII

THE BOER SECRET SERVICE UNDER DR. LEYDS

Chaotic Condition of the Secret Service—Dr. Leyds's First Press Agent—Leyds and English Sympathisers—Press Agents in Europe—The Pulse Feelers—German Secret Military Instructors—The N.Z.A.S.M. as Secret Service Agent—Mr. de Wilt and the Subsidised Press—Why Kruger was Prejudiced Against Newspapers—Story of the Pocket Handkerchiefs—Dr. Leyds as a Diplomat—Leyds and the Disloyal Cipher Clerk—Leyds's Punishment of a Slanderer—Did Kruger expect German Intervention?—Leyds's Germanic Sympathies—Afrikander Officials Reveal State Secrets—General Joubert too Talkative—Old Boers Suspicious of Cipher Dispatches—Did Kruger Run away?—Exploitation of Secret Service Funds by Uitlanders—How Tjaard Kruger Checkmated Bogus Informants

AN organised system of secret service was unknown in the Transvaal until Dr. Leyds became Secretary of State. It had not existed for the very good reason that it was not needed. When the Kruger Executive began to realise that European opinion was a thing that mattered, and that the South African Republic really had a foreign policy and foreign relations like other respectable and old-established countries, then, and not till then, was a separate account voted and kept for "informatie."

Within ten years the secret service of the Transvaal developed from a primitive affair of private inquiries and douceurs to pressmen for vague services to one of the most expensive and extensive in the world. It may also be added with safety—absolutely the worst managed. The results had about the same ratio to the cost of obtaining them as did the bread in Falstaff's wine score.

The explanation was simple. There was never a competent head of the department, and there were many and frequent changes. Further, instead of centralising the

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work of the secret service, it was scattered among every branch of the Government; consequently, there were absurd overlappings. At one time eleven different organisations existed, nominally each the principal secret service bureau, yet each controlled by different chiefs.

It is an axiom of good detective work that the various agents should not be known to each other, if collusion is to be avoided, and a thorough check kept upon individuals.

In the Transvaal service the only members who did not know one another were the heads of the respective departments. They were shifted from post to post with such embarrassing frequency that it was no uncommon thing for the chief of one department to address strictly confidential communications to a supposed chief of another for a week or two after the latter had been transferred to a new, and probably utterly different, branch of the service. No one having secret information to give to the Government could be certain as to whom he should go, and it is an open secret that more than one valuable communication was never taken advantage of, for the reason that the official to whom it was made held it back out of pique at being superseded. He refused to assist his successor. It is a fact that a proffered copy of an extremely valuable cipher failed to get into the hands of the Government because the official to whom it was offered had been removed to another branch of the service, and saw an opportunity for gratifying a petty revenge. He actually wrote to his successor telling him that the cipher had been shown and offered him, but, being no longer in the secret service, he felt he had no business to interest himself in its work. For that reason, he said, he had not taken a note of the name and address of the person offering the cipher, which, he added spitefully, "I took pains to ascertain was genuine."

That zealous patriot remained in the service of the

Government to the end, and was always bold in his assurances that he was an *oprecht burgher* and true friend to the State.

It sounds scarcely credible, but it is a fact that during the course of a single year over £5,000 was expended, quite unnecessarily, as the result of the practical jokes, revenges and jealousy of various heads of departments in the secret service. It was no unusual thing for one official, purely in a spirit of malicious rivalry, to lay himself out to thwart another in securing certain information, and it says something for the colossal complacency of a Government that would tolerate the existence of two rivals, and supply each with all the money demanded, in order that one might show that the other was on the wrong track or was incompetent.

There was absolutely no system in the selection of agents—either chiefs or subordinates. The most unlikely person often found himself placed in a position of authority, and asked to perform duties of which he had not the slightest knowledge; and this merely because he may have communicated a piece of information momentarily of value. It was a case of making a man manager of a fashionable restaurant because he could mix a salad. A modest member of the composing staff of the State Printing Works was offered a position in the police involving knowledge of the highest order of police control, on the strength of having detected a forgery in a State document. An official had signed the name of another to a printed form. The compositor, being familiar with the handwriting of the person whose signature was imitated, drew the attention of the foreman to it, with the result that a sapient head of department recognised in a compositor who could remember a man's signature one fit to control police! It should also be added that the compositor had a friend at court who had influence with the head of the department.

At the period of which we are writing—1896-9—there was not in the secret service a single man who had had any experience over and beyond that of informer. That is, nearly every man had been placed on the staff as a reward for having supplied some item of information more or less valuable. It is, therefore, quite believable that many of these secret agents were as blunderful and tactless as any ill-bred son of the soil could be even in a farcical sketch.

A case in point will illustrate this. Just after the Jameson Raid one of the writers was in the smoking-room of a Johannesburg hotel in the company of a friend who was an ardent amateur photographer. The latter produced, among others, and with no attempt at secrecy, some photographs of the Johannesburg fort, taken from the roof of an adjacent house, and showing rather more of the conformation of that grotesque structure than was visible to the observer on the ground.

A stranger sitting near became obviously and rudely interested in our conversation, and coolly asked to be allowed to look at the photographs. His manner was so boorish that we promptly snubbed him. Whereupon he boldly announced that he was in the secret service, and if we liked to stand in with him he could show us how those photographs could be turned to account to mutual advantage. Amused by the barefaced audacity of the proposal, and scenting material for a good newspaper article, we drew him out, not for a moment accepting his assurances regarding his connection with the secret service, but prepared to believe he was one of the jackals who hung around the detective office.

His proposal was simplicity itself. We were to let him have the photographs, which he would show to his chief, with the statement that he had obtained them from a stranger whom he caught in the act of taking them. The profit was to be made out of the liberal expenses which

would be allowed him while pretending to catch and identify the mysterious photographer.

This was such an absurd anti-climax that we left the creature in disgust, satisfied that he was an unoriginal humbug.

Very shortly afterwards we had ample proof that he was not only a member, but stood high in the secret service.

After the Transvaal Republic had ceased to exist we met him again, and recalled the incident, when he renewed his assurance that we were fools for not accepting his offer.

"I should have kept that job going for a couple of months," he said, "and have drawn £20 a week for expenses all the time."

Then he told a long story, which was probably true, showing how he and two other members of the secret service told Tjaard Kruger a bogus yarn of having had a conversation with a man who had a plan for tunnelling under the fort, and blowing it up. The trio were instructed to go thoroughly into the matter; which they did, on an allowance of £10 a week apiece for six weeks.

The probability that this story was true, and that the same hoccussing would have been carried out had we fallen in with the original proposal, is strengthened by the admitted fact that at this period the Government was being fleeced by a horde of unscrupulous temporary officials. The Jameson Raid had put the Executive on the defensive. They were prepared to believe any story of impending conspiracy, however preposterous. We are in possession of details of some of these impudent "ramps," so outrageously improbable that, although our evidence is irrefutable, ordinary caution and respect for the intelligence of the average reader make us pause. They would be put down as extravagant and childish inventions, and certainly they have neither originality nor humour to recommend them.

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It is, however, only just to admit that, after the Jameson Raid, anything was possible and nothing would be surprising. Most members of the Executive were very much annoyed with one another for having discarded the plain warnings they had received in good time; now they went to the other extreme, and invited the counsel they had before ignored. Needless to say, their appeal was promptly responded to. The heads of departments saw to that, for extra precautions meant the handling of more money. From the Raid until the war money flowed through the secret service bureau at Pretoria. When Tjaard Kruger, son of the President, was for a short time chief of the secret bureau, he kept thousands of pounds in gold in his office. All payments were made in cash, and the demand was ever increasing. On one afternoon in 1906 £2,800 were paid out to casual callers only—men who came accredited by some person in authority as being able to supply valuable information. It was a feature of all purveyors of secrets that they needed liberal conduct money in advance; and invariably got it.

One of the writers met in Pretoria about this time a broken-down doctor whom he had known for a year or two as a hopelessly impecunious cadger. He came out of the office of Tjaard Kruger, and jocularly invited the writer to test the goodness of the Kruger sovereigns he had on him. He produced one hundred and fifty—the price of a piece of information, given as a sample of more to follow.

"Before they get all of it, they will have to double this lot," said the doctor. There is reason to believe that the boast was justified.

Obviously, dealings with purveyors of stolen and illicit goods cannot be conducted on the lines of straightforward business, and much has to be taken on trust, even by the shrewd and experienced men of affairs who

are at the head of the secret service in older civilisations. Therefore, it is not surprising that the tyros who had the management of the Transvaal secret service and its plethoric cash should have manifested in their transactions the recklessness of those unused to assessing either the value of money or the goods purchased. We have also to consider the very important fact that it was to the personal interest of those having control of the negotiations to handle as much money as possible, for the larger the sums paid out the greater the margin for illicit commission. Further, in common with most simple people, the average Boer mind regarded largeness of price as the best guarantee of goodness of quality. The man who asked £10 for a piece of information was on much the same plane, in official estimation, as the person who asks an advance of a sovereign from a financial corporation dealing in public and national loans. The type of person who realised that there was money in political secrets was not slow in recognising the fact that he enhanced the apparent value of his goods by asking a big price.

The secret service introduced by Dr. Leyds mainly took a perfectly legitimate form: that of defending the Republic from the prejudicial attacks and criticisms which appeared from time to time in the British and Continental Press, and "writing up" the country.

The first, and probably the ablest, man so employed was Mr. Reginald F. Statham, an Englishman who for some years had been in Natal and the Transvaal. He was sent to London, paid a reasonable honorarium, and given a free hand. His duties consisted in watching Transvaal interests in the Press. He had done very good work of a similar character on behalf of Zululand, but *con amore*. He seized every opportunity, and made many, for educating English opinion, and on the whole acquitted himself to the satisfaction of Dr. Leyds.

But he failed in an important particular: he allowed

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it to be known that he was a paid champion. Naturally, this detracted from his weight, and rendered editors less kind. He found it less easy to obtain a hearing in reply to an article or letter misrepresenting matters affecting the Transvaal. Towards the end of his engagement, Mr. Statham's name on a communication was its death-warrant in the eyes of several editors who before had regularly published his letters. His style and subject were too well known in the leading newspaper offices for an unsigned letter to pass undetected; besides which, Mr. Statham had a commendable objection to anonymous communications. Therefore, in due course, he outlived his utility, and retired, after doing some good educative work in influencing, not the crowd, but a few persons whose position in the political world made them valuable allies.

Dr. Leyds had never been in favour of the open advocacy of the Statham style, and the failure of the experiment not only confirmed the Doctor's opinions, but gave him an idea.

That idea is apparently so commonplace that, until one knows how expensive it is, one wonders it had not been sooner acted upon.

The championship of an avowed friend carries less weight than the mild approval of a supposed enemy.

Dr. Leyds's plan was to purchase either the silence or the mild approval of European journals hitherto hostile or indifferent. He decided to have no more open advocates, who could be depreciated by inability to deny a charge of holding a retainer. To this resolve he was faithful all through. It has been suggested, rather than boldly avowed, that certain pro-Boer champions in England were subsidised by Dr. Leyds. It may be accepted as a fact that the last person to receive pay for this kind of advocacy in Great Britain was Mr. Reginald Statham; and he earned it. Dr. Leyds, when chaffed on

the subject of subsidising certain British journals, very shrewdly remarked :

"The papers I should like to subsidise, I can't; those I could are not worth it."

Considering how slight was Dr. Leyds's acquaintance with England, he had a remarkably accurate grasp and perception of the English character. He realised to the full how easily a British crowd is swayed by an emphatic and repeated cry, if it comes from someone who has the ear of the people. He knew thoroughly what was meant by the phrase, "The Nonconformist conscience"; and it would not please some very earnest champions of the Transvaal Government to know how the Doctor squirmed on reading their impassioned speeches.

"He means well, but he doesn't understand," was his comment on several occasions.

"Blatant and sporadic advocacy is useless. It makes a noise like the blasting at the ——" [he named a much talked of but barren mine], "but very little comes out of it, except noise."

This was his remark when an English Member of Parliament wrote to the Doctor telling him that he had delivered speeches in support of the Transvaal in Scotland, Wales and Essex.

He did not say that in the letter of acknowledgment. That was for home consumption. The reply to the member must have made that gentleman believe Dr. Leyds regarded him as the saviour of the situation.

He was a marvel of self-control, and understood, if any man did, when to speak and when to keep silence.

The writer was once with the Pretoria correspondent of the Johannesburg *Star* at the time that journal was violently attacking Pretorian diplomacy in general, and Dr. Leyds in particular.

That day's *Star* contained an unusually pungent communication from its Pretoria representative. We en-

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countered Dr. Leyds as he was leaving his office, reading a copy of the journal.

Looking up, he nodded to us.

"I'm enjoying this, Tommy; really, I am. It's the best thing you've done for a month." And with a genial corroborative nod, the State Secretary passed out.

Dr. Leyds was not parochial. That is why the old regime Boers could not understand, and disliked, him. To them, Europe and England were far-away places, in which they could take only a subjective interest; to the State Secretary they were more than Potchefstroom or even Paulpotgietersrust. He very carefully watched the Press of Germany, France and England, and had private correspondents in each centre; but those who profess to know who they were and how much they received for their services are impostors. This was one department which the State Secretary kept entirely in his own hands. No cheques were ever sent from Pretoria to these allies. They received their salaries through a European bank, and probably not even Mr. Treasurer Boshoff knew the names of the recipients or the amounts. One of the authors had the accidental opportunity of seeing the letter of instruction sent by Dr. Leyds to one of his representatives on the Press in Europe. It was clear, precise and exacting, and provided for every possible contingency; yet had that letter fallen into the hands of the unauthorised, it would have conveyed little. It is questionable whether even a Transvaal politician, thoroughly familiar with the trend of events, would have been able to use the document as conclusive evidence that Dr. Leyds was instructing an agent to supply him with a certain class of goods for a specific purpose. It was a letter that bespoke the diplomat. It could have come safely out of an investigation by a committee of suspicious spy hunters.

The first important inquiry work undertaken by the Transvaal Government in South Africa was the year of

the Raid, when a corps of cyclists, about thirty strong, was sent to Cape Colony to feel the pulse of the Cape Boers. The party consisted of young Afrikanders and a few British-born Colonials, all speaking English and the Taal well. They posed as Transvaalers making a holiday tour, and played the part exceedingly well. Travelling singly or in couples, they would put up at a Boer homestead, where, being companionable and obviously well supplied with money, they had no difficulty in ingratiating themselves with their hosts. Transvaal politics naturally formed a prominent part of the matters discussed, the guests not hesitating to avow themselves strongly in favour of a movement towards the realisation of the "Africa for the Afrikaner" aspiration. There is reason for believing that their sentiments were received with general sympathy, and their reports on returning did much to encourage the anti-British party in Pretoria to believe that, in the event of war with England, the Transvaal could rely upon the support of a majority of the Cape Boers.

This expedition was very carefully arranged, and extraordinary precautions were taken to keep it secret; but the most thoughtful cannot provide against such an accident as placed an unsuspecting commercial traveller in possession of a clue. He was staying at an hotel at Graaf Reinet, and had to share a double-bedded room with one of the cyclists, who left next morning soon after sunrise. When about to leave, the commercial was accosted by the Kaffir chambermaid, who handed him a letter which she said she had found under his pillow. Not having extra fine scruples on the matter of the sacredness of other people's letters, he read the document before deciding whether it was his or not. It was an elaborate report of the result of visits to a dozen or more Cape Boers, and set out in unmistakable language the result of the pulse-feeling. Justifying the larceny

to his conscience on the ground of the national importance of the subject, he pocketed the letter, and in due course showed it, under a pledge of secrecy, to a trustworthy friend, who in turn confided in another trustworthy friend, with the result that the adage which declares that a secret confided to another ceases to be a secret, came true.

The story and a copy of the letter reached the editor of a Johannesburg paper, who published a paragraph of the broad-hint-of-revelations-to-follow order. Nothing more was published, which may be explained by the fact that a prominent Pretorian official was seen in the company of the journalist a day or two later.

The elections for the Cape Parliament took place soon after this, and an unusual amount of money was spent in the interest of candidates representing the Afrikaner Bond—the party in sympathy with Pretoria. It may have been merely a coincidence, but several Krugerites selected this season for taking a holiday and visiting their friends in Cape Colony. Whether these facts had any influence on the results of the elections cannot be definitely proved, but the Bond party won more seats than was reasonably expected.

It was about this time that the slow and gradual introduction of Germans into the public service began to be noticed. About three hundred had been imported between 1892 and 1894, but within a year of the Raid the known number was at least a thousand. For the most part they were of a good and educated type, but all men who had had extra military training. The exact position occupied by many was vague and indeterminate. They held generally subordinate offices of a clerical nature, yet they all had a large amount of time on their hands. They foregathered at three or four hotels, and, by virtue of their unfamiliarity with the Taal, did not at first associate with the people. Most of them, however, soon

acquired the language and became fairly friendly with the Burghers. But the Boer was not disposed to welcome aliens, even as sympathetic as the Germans, too eagerly. The old hands were suspicious, knowing that the financial houses who had engineered the Raid were mainly German. The young Afrikaners were jealous. They had never forgiven Dr. Leyds for putting his own countrymen into the best billets. It was useless pointing out to them that most of the offices held by Hollanders required men of European training. If, they argued, the post of Commissioner of Railways could be held by a Boer like J. S. Smidt, whom rumour accredited with typical Boer illiteracy, why were not other sons of the soil fitted for minor positions in the railway administration? Feeling became strong when it was known that a number of these imported Germans were attached to the railway company, in what are known as soft jobs. The reason was not apparent, and only understood by the few who were aware that the Netherlands Zuid Afrikaansche Spoorweg Maatschappij was the medium and agent of Dr. Leyds's secret service.

In Mr. De Wilt, the general manager and secretary, and a Hollander, Dr. Leyds had an able, tactful, gentlemanlike lieutenant. Like the State Secretary, Mr. De Wilt understood the art of being all things to all men. It was impossible to quarrel with him; difficult not to like him. He had the Doctor's gift of making every new caller, however unimportant, feel that he was the one person worth devoting time upon.

"Man, but he *was* pleased to see me!" was the frequent remark of a nobody who had sought and obtained an interview with the busiest yet most accessible of State Secretaries; and the same impression was always conveyed by the general manager and secretary of the N.Z.A.S.M.

For some reason not quite clear the railway company

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had most of the work of controlling and nobbling the Press; but there were few things in the State that did not come within its purview, from building contracts to the purchase of mealies and printing material. The great weapon of the N.Z.A.S.M. was its advertising orders. Advertisements are ever the "open sesame" to the most exclusive editorial sanctums, even with those journals which insist in large and standing type that all communications respecting advertisements must be made to the manager of that department. Probably no railway company in the world advertised so lavishly and, in certain journals, so superfluously; and certainly no business concern ever paid out more promptly and with less checking or questioning of accounts. As to the supplying of "copy," the fortunate advertising manager had no worry. If none was sent from Pretoria, he simply gave out the latest handbill or time-table alteration that came to hand. On one occasion, one cormorant, whose appetite for official advertisements was notorious throughout South African Press circles, filled a half-page with the single alteration in a local train time-table, and the rest of the page with the announcement: "The above is the only alteration in the train service this month."

The circulation of the sheet was five hundred; the charge for the advertisement £25!

This same energetic and resourceful wielder of a caustic pen on another occasion wrote asking for authority to insert as an advertisement the entire time-table of the system, which had appeared in sheet form occupying a full page of the *Standard and Diggers' News*, the semi-official Government organ. Consent was given. He wired back: "Am setting time-table in exactly same type. Do you approve?" The answer was "Yes."

Even Mr. De Wilt betrayed surprise when the

account was presented for his inspection by the doubtful cashier :

| | |
|---|----------|
| Six insertions of time-table at £30 . . . | £180 0 0 |
| Composing same | 15 0 0 |
| Cost of type specially purchased for same according to your instructions . . . | 30 0 0 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £225 0 0 |
| | <hr/> |

Mr. De Wilt sent back the account for amendment. The editor rushed to Pretoria, blustered, coaxed and threatened that unless he got a cheque in full he would withdraw his support from the Government.

Mr. De Wilt smiled, and modestly pointed out that, while prepared to pay the £180—which was more than the price charged by journals of ten times the circulation and influence—it was not the custom of other journals to charge for composition or type.

The reply was ingenuous.

"You must know that a small office like mine would not have sufficient type to print a big thing like a time-table. Besides, I specially warned you what I was doing, and you agreed."

He produced the telegram in corroboration.

Mr. De Wilt still shied at the extras; but the editor continued to bluff, until proof was supplied that, instead of purchasing type as alleged, he had offered £5 to *The Standard and Diggers' News* for a stereotype of the page of the time-table as printed in that journal, and actually owed for that, refusing to pay on the ground that one Government journal ought to assist another.

One would have imagined that this exposure would have silenced the impostor; but he had grown bold through long practice and success in overcharging. He continued to demand and threaten, but Mr. De Wilt held out.

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The editor did not withdraw his support from the Government, but attacked a local official, who brought an action for libel against the editor, who fought and lost. In the end the railway bought up the paper and plant, lock, stock and barrel, for £400. A Johannesburg journal suggested that the editor was included in the price, but that was a misstatement. He joined the staff of a journal devoted to exposing the corruptness of the Pretorian Government.

It was an understood thing that journals on the list for receipt of Government and official advertisements should not wait for authority, but copy them out of the copy from the *Staats Courant* such advertisements as reputable journals, unless otherwise instructed, used to give the announcement about the same space it occupied in the official journal, but the rate of payment was a special and private matter between the authorities and the newspaper people.

A newly-started country newspaper got on to the official advertisement list, and received the customary order to copy from the *Staats Courant* such advertisements as concerned its immediate district.

The editor, being both green and conscientious, gave to the copied announcements the same space they occupied in the official organ, and charged only a little more than ordinary rates. When he went to Pretoria to collect his first month's account it was only a matter of £30.

The under-official who had the duty of receiving and pretending to check such amounts was surprised and friendly.

"It is not much," he said.

The journalist explained that he had duly inserted all advertisements that related to his district.

"Yes, but you don't spread them out like ——" He named the gentleman who came to grief over the railway time-table. He proceeded :

"You will have to give £10 to the clerks in this office for getting the account passed; and if it came to £100 they would be content with £10. Why don't you spread them more? And why confine yourself merely to local announcements?"

The kindly hint was not lost. Next month's account ran into three figures, though the number of advertisements had not increased. The space they occupied in the local sheet had. A four-inch advertisement in the Government gazette expanded to a twenty-inch column in the invigorating air of the district in which the paper was printed. As the official had suggested, an account of £150 cost no more time or commission to collect than one of £30. A ten-pound note pinned to the account when delivered over the desk was all that was necessary to ensure a cheque for the amount in full within half an hour.

These payments for Press services were never liked by Paul Kruger, not because he objected to subsidies, but for the reason that he did not understand or appreciate the Press. He was a believer in the spoken rather than the written word. If he wished to convert people to his views, he sent for or went to them and talked. He probably never in his life committed his thoughts to paper, and had small patience with a process that to the end was somewhat of a mystery to him.

It must be confessed that few rulers ever had less reason for loving the Press. The newspapers that came within his range were generally antagonistic, and, more often than not, maliciously unfair and brutal. He was particularly sensitive to criticism of his personality. There is a stupid story told of his purchasing half a dozen pocket handkerchiefs for his first trip to Europe, and, on his return, asking Beckett, the Pretorian store-keeper who supplied him, to take back and allow for the five he had not used. This story was his special

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aversion, and he made great efforts to discover the author. For several years he would have some person under suspicion for a period, and visit his anger upon him and his in all sorts of ways. Then another suspect would take his place, until a fresh clue implicated yet a third, fourth, or fortieth. A prominent member of the Bar was suspect for two or three years, and it was always a puzzle to him why he suddenly became the object of the President's animosity, till a member of the Kruger entourage let out the secret. It is said that the suspected advocate shed tears at the interview in which he vindicated his character, and on attempting to dry them used the sleeve of his coat, schoolboy fashion, for he had no pocket handkerchief! That was accepted by Kruger as proof of innocence.

This story is true. The one that gave rise to it is not.

A striking and probably unique feature of the subsidising of the Press by Dr. Leyds was that, having given *carte blanche* to a journalist, he never interfered. He either trusted altogether or not at all. In many cases no communication was held with the journalist after the first interview. His paper or articles were duly filed and carefully read when the subject or occasion was important. But there was none of that fussy calling for new tunes, that too often makes the life of a subsidised journalist a thing of terror and the man who pays the piper a task-master who is hated. This was part of Dr. Leyds's scheme of conciliation. He placated every person he could, and he is a brilliant example of the truth of the homely but expressive proverb, "Treacle catches more flies than vinegar."

It has been, and is, the boast—often a vulgar boast—of some public men that they never read or trouble about attacks or criticisms upon themselves and their work. It is in nineteen cases out of twenty not true, and, in any case, it is unwise, for reasons which should be apparent to

any thinking person, and therefore need not be expatiated upon here.

Dr. Leyds was not one of these affected persons. He read most things written against him and his Government, and was never reluctant to hear from a gossip what people were saying. How much, or whether, he cared can never be known; but it is as certain as most unprovable things can be, that his intimate acquaintance with the trend of the public mind assisted him greatly in directing his policy.

His private correspondents and intelligence collectors were numerous and appreciated. He treated each as if he were the only one, and absolutely indispensable, with the result that he got loyal and effective service.

A case which came under the notice of one of the authors is characteristic of the thoroughness of the man's methods.

On the occasion of his visit to Europe in 1895, whither we now know he went to secure European alliances for the Transvaal, he was particularly desirous of meeting an influential Austrian Count. In the ordinary course he would probably not have got in touch with him, for, though taking a part in politics, the Count was not publicly in them, but led the life of a private gentleman, and had the reputation of being unusually inaccessible to strangers.

Dr. Leyds instructed his private agents to find out and acquaint him with all that was obtainable about the Count's tastes, habits, prejudices and amusements. In due course the report arrived; but it was very scanty, providing little more than what was already known to the general public. Among the desultory items of information in the mass of unimportant trifles was a record of the Count's attendance at three concerts. Circumstantial evidence suggested that his presence had been the result of something more than mere caprice or convention, for

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the events were by no means fashionable or even extra artistic, and on one of the occasions the Count had clearly made a long and tiresome journey in order to be present.

Dr. Leyds set to work to discover the attraction. He noted that, except for one item, the performers and programme were different at each concert. A Hungarian violinist performed his national music on each occasion. A letter of instruction and suggestion to the agent brought corroboration of the correctness of the Doctor's surmise. The Count was enthusiastic on one phase of Hungarian music.

Dr. Leyds, who is a more than usually accomplished musician and an artistic violinist, set about studying Hungarian composers of the school appreciated by the Count. When he reached Europe his advent was heralded by the usual newspaper "Personals," and in most of them great stress was laid upon the fact that the Transvaal State Secretary was an ardent student of Hungarian music, and intended to spend some time in certain districts where he could gratify his musical predilections.

Within a month of reaching Berlin, Dr. Leyds was the guest of the Count at his retreat in the country where only the closest intimates were usually admitted.

Here is a story illustrating another phase of the many-sided character of a man who has never yet had justice done him in public:

Among the Germans imported for special services was one in whom Dr. Leyds took extra interest, because he displayed more than average ability. Zeal in an alien the State Secretary always regarded with suspicion; but ability he appreciated and encouraged, and never failed to turn to personal advantage. Young Max—to give him a name—was an odd admixture of sterling and questionable qualities. He had all the proverbial German application and stickatenedness, and an almost Parisian gaiety and recklessness. He had, however, one defect, which Dr.

Leyds turned to advantage. He was a poor linguist, and either would not or could not acquire a working acquaintance with either English or Dutch. Probably for the same reason which induces Oriental potentates to choose deaf mutes as guardians of their harems, Dr. Leyds gave Max a responsible position in his private office—that of cipher and correspondence clerk for the numerous communications in the German language.

Max, being very human, got attached to an attractive German girl in a Pretorian tea-shop, and spent much time with her. Unfortunately, she was also an object of the jealous attention of Colonel Schiel, then a person of considerable importance in Pretoria and the Transvaal generally; and, woman-like, the girl was more responsive to the cash-laden, handsome commandant—whom everybody saluted—than to the humble clerk. The reasonable suggestion is that Max's vanity was hurt, and by way of asserting his importance and convincing his inamorata that he was at least as great a person as the dashing *militaire*, he told her things that ought never to have escaped his lips. At that period Pretoria was alive with spies, actual and prospective. The girl told what she had heard, in order to impress someone that she also was admitted to a share of State secrets; and in a very short time Dr. Leyds knew that his confidential cipher expert had betrayed his trust.

He sent for the culprit, and put the case clearly.

"That woman knows too much. Someone must act as guard over her mouth. The best guardian of a German woman is her husband. You must marry her. If not——"

What the alternative was we do not pretend to know, but it was sufficient inducement for Max. He married the girl, and remained in his position with Dr. Leyds for a year longer, when he was given a lucrative appointment in the Dutch East Indies, where Dr. Leyds had consider-

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able influence. So far as outsiders were able to judge, the marriage proved mutually satisfactory.

Like many undemonstrative men, Dr. Leyds was capable of strong feeling in matters affecting his dignity, and never forgave an insult. He took his own time and means for revenge, and generally "got even" very effectively. His punishment of a firm of gunmakers who offended him was a case in point.

Directly after the Raid, when it became an open secret that the Transvaal Government were purchasing munitions of war, Pretoria swarmed with the representatives of manufacturers of lethal weapons of every description, and their objective was General Piet Joubert, who, as Commandant-General, had the principal voice in deciding what should or should not be adopted. Among the representatives was one who pushed the claims of a new rifle with more zeal than discretion. He was an American-German, and a type of the vulgar, assertive person one more usually finds representing some Barnum-like business than a reputable firm. He was blatant and tactless; presented specimens of his wares to editors, members of the Raad, officials, and any and every person whom he thought likely to assist him in getting a contract placed. In addition, he talked openly and wildly in public of his business, and altogether was about as impossible a person as was ever entrusted with a delicate mission. He worried General Joubert till, in desperation, the old gentleman referred him to the State Secretary. Dr. Leyds was a great character reader, and formed a pretty accurate estimate of a person in a surprisingly short time. His opinion of the gun-man was evidently poor, for he dismissed him promptly in his suave, agreeable manner, which some one pertinently described as kicking a man with a felt slipper on to a soft door-mat.

The gun-man took his rebuff very badly, and openly declared that he had failed to do business with the Govern-

ment because he would not square the State Secretary. He was too discreet to say this in plain words, but there was no room for doubt as to what was inferred.

A few days later he was surprised and delighted by a letter from an official in the Commandant-General's office intimating that a trial test would be made of twenty of the revolvers which had been recommended by the representative as specially adapted for arming the police. He supplied the goods with promptitude, and awaited the result impatiently. For nearly six months he was kept in Pretoria, under conditions particularly irksome to a man of his expansive and gregarious character. He was emphatically cautioned against leaving the capital, frequenting public bars, talking with any person, or calling upon members of the Government. In fine he was treated as a suspect prisoner on parole, and only the prospect of making a profitable deal would have reconciled any man to the hard conditions. When the unfortunate representative had almost decided that he must either quit the town or die of ennui, he received a report of the trial test.

Anything more damning had never been written of a new weapon. It had failed in every kind of test applied to it; several barrels had burst, cartridges had jammed, and, in fine, the only damage the revolver was ever likely to do was to the person foolish enough to use it.

Then came the Machiavellian touch of Dr. Leyds:

"No doubt some of these defects might be remedied; but owing to the indiscretion of the representative of the firm in showing the weapon to many unauthorised persons, one of the essential conditions of the acceptance of a new weapon—secrecy—has been broken.

"A copy of this report has been sent to the manufacturers."

A copy also, somehow, got into several newspapers.

One question around which there has always been a vast amount of discussion of an unsatisfying kind is that

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of how far, or whether at all, the Transvaal Government had any assurance or reasonable hope of German assistance.

Until Dr. Leyds chooses to open his mouth on the matter—a highly improbable contingency—that question will never be satisfactorily set at rest.

The circumstantial evidence is all in favour of the assumption that Paul Kruger, the Executive, and many influential Boers believed that if the worst came, and England ever was in a position to dictate terms, she would have to reckon with Germany.

Here are a few facts capable of demonstration :

While in Europe, both after the Raid and during the progress of the war, Dr. Leyds spent most of his time either in Berlin or in close contact with influential German personages.

The bulk of his correspondence from Europe was in German; numerous enclosures, in the shape of documents, were in German; and the confidential clerk who had the handling of most of Dr. Leyds's dispatches from Europe to Pretoria was not his official chief private secretary, but the young German referred to in this chapter as Max.

When Paul Kruger went from Pretoria down the line to Delagoa Bay, Max accompanied him, although, as before mentioned, his acquaintance with the Taal was of the slightest. He carried with him three large dispatch boxes, and passed much of the time on the journey in making copies of translations from documents in German.

Max returned to Pretoria a week after the departure of Paul Kruger, and, in company with Mr. P. L. A. Goodman (Dr. Leyds's chief confidential secretary), spent many hours, with locked doors, sorting papers and burning—something.

As Max knew only German, reading French and Dutch slightly, it is a fair inference that he handled only German documents.

Many telegrams from Europe arrived in Pretoria

during Dr. Leyds's absence addressed personally to Max at his lodgings, all of them in German, many in a code or cipher not known to the other cipher experts attached to the State Secretary's department.

It was significant that after having obtained for Max a position in Java, Dr. Leyds brought him back to Pretoria on the eve of his leaving for Europe.

That many influential Germans in the Transvaal honestly believed that their Emperor would intervene in the event of England winning is a generally accepted fact. More than one openly asserted it when the tide was turning against the Boers. There was a large contingent of Germans with the commando at Sandspuit, on the Natal border, in October, 1899, and a series of quarrels arose between the Hollander officials and these Germans. One of the most frequent taunts used by the latter against the Hollanders was, "You have had your innings. Wait a bit, for our time is coming."

A German doctor attached to the Boer ambulance was particularly emphatic. He frequently repeated that he knew, from the only authority, that Kruger had been assured by Dr. Leyds that, if needed, German intervention would come.

To the average European, unfamiliar with the primitive conditions of Boerdom, there may appear something puerile in attaching any importance to the gossip of the dorp and canteen; but the fact remains that there have been few State secrets in Pretoria that have not leaked out through humble and insignificant channels. It should be remembered that the absence of class distinctions, of a distinct governing class, and particularly of those traditions which are the outcome of generations of responsible officialdom, made impossible that impenetrability and official seclusion which are features of older governments.

It was quite possible that the office boy who opened

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the door to a secretary of state's sanctum was brother or nephew of a cabinet minister, and reported privately to his relative on the acts and callers of his immediate baas.

The strangely varied status of members of an otherwise united family may be gauged from this by no means extreme example :

Father, jailer of a small dorp ; mother, district monthly nurse ; eldest son, cabinet minister of the Orange Free State ; second son, transport rider ; third son, ticket collector on the railway ; daughter, wife of the district chief commandant (equivalent to a field-marshal), the commandant being the only son of an immensely wealthy Boer ; one brother-in-law, village sanitary inspector ; another male relation, the village bar-loafer.

When one knows how closely welded are the ties and interests of a Boer family, there is no cause for scepticism when the village accoucheuse is able to state authoritatively what policy was decided upon at the last meeting of the Executive ; and even less cause for regarding as an impostor the village loafer when he dogmatizes in the canteen on State secrets.

What in England would be contemptuously dismissed as the guessing and gossip of the servants' hall, would, in the Transvaal, be entitled to as much weight as attaches to the whispered confidences of the most exclusive London political clubs.

Owing to the ramifications of this family system throughout its officialdom, Krugersdorp was for some years the best-informed centre in Boerdom on matters political. Again and again was one of the writers, when conducting the *Transvaal Sentinel*, able to give a lead to the journalists of Johannesburg, and even of Pretoria, and rarely did it happen that his forecasts were not justified by results. In the majority of cases the information came through private channels, and was imparted, not in any spirit of boastful superior knowledge, but merely as an

item of gossip reported quite casually by the latest arrival from Pretoria to his friends and relations in the dorp. It was the rarest thing to be told anything under the seal of strict confidence. "Everybody will know all about it to-morrow," was a frequent remark of one of the best-informed newsmongers.

The fact that Paul Kruger was suffering from the disease which eventually killed him was common property in the dorp within twelve hours of the private pronouncement by the doctors; yet it took a month to travel to Johannesburg and appear in print in the form of a vague hint conveyed with the portentous importance of the sole possessor of a secret of State.

It has been hinted that the late General Piet Joubert was one of the most indiscreetly talkative of men, and there are stories of his having had cause to complain of being purposely kept in the dark by Paul Kruger on matters on which he had a right to be informed. Whether this be true or not, it was a curious fact that the General never left Krugersdorp, after one of his frequent private visits to certain favoured officials, without a crop of more or less interesting items of political news circulating through the dorp. They were never speculations, but always proved reliable, whether relating to the past or the future.

It was Dr. Leyds who first tried to teach officialdom the necessity and dignity of reticence. It was a difficult task. The Boer is a whole-souled democrat, and interprets *ons land* (our land) very literally. He resents being denied participation in the business affairs of the State. If he asked his Raad member what took place at the private meeting held to settle who should beard the President, he expected to have an answer. If he had a son in the Government service—and most elderly Boers had—he not merely expected, but demanded to be told all he wished to know; and was rarely refused.

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The youthful officials keenly resented the efforts of Dr. Leyds to muzzle them when outside their offices. The Hollanders, coming from an older civilisation, needed little or no caution, and their natural and habitually guarded conduct became one of the counts in the indictment brought against them by the old burghers. Their silence was interpreted to mean standoffishness, and proof of a conspiracy to isolate themselves from the Afrikanders. Many an official secret was blurted out in public by an irritated young Transvaaler by way of protest against the uncommunicative Hollander. When, as sometimes happened, the circumstance came to the ears of a chief of department, and he sent for and reprimanded the offender, some innocent Hollander always was suspected of having been the informer, and a vendetta would be organised—Transvaalers of the Mines Department versus the Hollanders of the Native Department, for instance.

Now and then an example would be made of some too-loquacious official, but the effect was only transitory. Within a month another purging would be needed, until in some departments the chiefs found it better to take no notice of infractions of the rules, as strictness involved too many changes.

When Dr. Leyds introduced codes and ciphers, the innovation was regarded with great suspicion by the older officials. They could appreciate a code which reduced the cost of cabling considerably, but shied at the cipher messages, which, besides being understandable only by the educated Hollanders, cost often five times the amount of a code or even an ordinary plain language telegram. Up to the very last one influential member of Kruger's entourage argued that Dr. Leyds had introduced cipher dispatches to suit his own wicked ends, and, whenever he could, he insisted on having a cipher message checked by a person whom he could trust.

It says much for the infinite tact and patience of Dr.

Leyds that he was able to pursue his course along the devious paths, beset with pitfalls and gins by unsympathetic and openly hostile members of the Government, without once losing his balance. Although the most disliked member of the Government staff, his office worked with less friction than any in Pretoria, and no official got so much and such excellent work from his subordinates. It is not too much to say that for at least half the period which he spent as State Secretary Dr. Leyds had to contend against the most powerful opposition; but never once did he lose the confidence either of the President or the more educated officials, and never failed to get his own way when he had resolved upon it.

Dr. Leyds kept absolutely in his own hands all that appertained to the business of foreign relations. The burgher of the State, whether as official or private person, was kept off that preserve. It was the side of diplomacy in which the State Secretary delighted and excelled. In the first years of his Secretaryship the parish-pump type of politics, of necessity, demanded much of his attention; but he was always prompt in handing over the petty details to a subordinate.

And he did it so gracefully, giving an agreeable impression that he was relegating the work, not because it irked him, but because he had found a man more capable than himself—the man whom he had long sought.

His correspondence with Europe was enormous; his watch on European politics microscopic and unrelaxing; his knowledge of the conditions exhaustive. He subscribed to and read more European papers than even the polyglot inhabitants of Johannesburg, and could read between the lines of an inspired article with an accuracy and perspicuity that astonished every educated foreigner with whom he discussed politics.

An educated member of the Raad, who knew the State

Secretary better than most of his colleagues, once remarked to the writer :

"He gives a day to European politics for every minute he devotes to the Transvaal. Yet he knows this country as well as Paul Kruger, which is saying much."

We suggested that the comparison fairly represented the proportional importance of Europe to the Transvaal.

"Yes, that may be; but we pay him to look after the Transvaal, not the affairs of Europe," came the prompt answer. It fairly expressed the attitude of even the educated burghers towards the State Secretary.

So far as the motive of so cautious and astute a man can be divined in the light of his known acts, everything points to the probability that those who suspected Dr. Leyds of having for his objective an alliance with Germany are nearest the truth. His relationship towards the Germans in the Transvaal was always markedly friendly. He was ever chary about using his influence directly in favour of any person, but if Dr. Leyds had the casting vote it was always safe to calculate on a German getting the better of rival applicants for a position.

"An average burgher is not sufficiently well educated for the higher positions," he would say. "An Englishman is impossible. If I appoint a Hollander I shall be accused of favouring my own countrymen, and make more enemies among the old Boers. A German is the only man possible. He is a judicious compromise, and he is usually competent."

Gradually and almost imperceptibly he eliminated the Boer element in his own department, filling the vacancies with Germans. The unflinching tact of the born diplomat was present in every case. Knowing the jealous and suspicious character of the average Afrikaner, and realising, even better than the subjects themselves, that cash weighed more with them than dignity and patriotism, Dr. Leyds was always careful in arranging that the dis-

placed official should be promoted to a more lucrative position. If that was not possible, there would be an increase in the importance of the new office, and the same pay as attached to that vacated. Then—mark the tact that disarmed jealousy!—the German successor would receive a little less salary than his Afrikaner predecessor, on the legitimate and reasonable grounds that he was new to the work, and would have to qualify for an increase of pay.

This astute policy was invariable and brilliantly successful. Rarely, if ever, did the transferred officials complain. It was the old Boers—the small but influential coterie of personal and intimate friends of the President—who detected and suspected the Germanising process going on in the department of the State Secretary. Now and then Dr. Leyds would be called upon to explain and justify the transference of one of his staff.

With pained surprise he would point out that it was true that he had parted with a certain member of his staff, but only because he considered the abilities of the young man worthy of greater scope and reward than the department of the State Secretary could offer.

"I only wish I could have him back," was a judicious and subtle final touch that disarmed further criticism and sent away the friends of the young burgher flattered and content.

It is true that several highly-placed Boer members of the staff were retained, and even advanced in status and pay; but they were only ornamental dummies. They never came into close contact with their chief. He encouraged them to relegate their special duties to their subordinates. Dr. Leyds took care that he appointed the subordinates.

At its zenith the department of the Secretary of State was, despite the largeness of the staff, a "one-man show." The head officials were merely block ornaments, the sub-

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ordinates capable and plastic tools of Dr. Leyds. It was a triumphant case of the end justifying the means, for Dr. Leyds was supreme dictator of the Transvaal, the President and the Executive little more than members of his staff, except that they did not know their actual position. They were satisfied, like the transferred young burgher official; so was the State Secretary.

Among those who thoroughly believed in the ultimate intervention and assistance of Germany was Paul Kruger. He would have been less than human if he had not interpreted that famous congratulatory telegram from the Kaiser after the Raid as every thinking man in the country did.

When is added to that the fact that Dr. Leyds was cabling from Europe encouraging, though non-committal, reports of his friendly relations with German personages, any doubt which the old President may have had was completely removed.

There were, however, two or three members of the inner circle who were not satisfied. They were shrewd enough to perceive that the dispatches were cautiously worded and never emphatic. They demanded that Dr. Leyds should be asked to say distinctly whether a definite agreement had been come to. No reply to this pertinent and pressing inquiry was ever received, though many dispatches followed. All evaded that query.

In answer to a remonstrance on the vagueness of his messages, Dr. Leyds cabled, "Caution necessary. Cables being intercepted." And with that the Executive had to be content.

This, more than anything else, decided Paul Kruger on going himself to Europe to complete the business in which his agent had apparently failed. No one who knew Kruger ever entertained the notion that he "ran away." He went firmly persuaded that his personality was necessary to clench the work of the State Secretary.

When he reached Europe he learned for the first time that Kings and Kaisers are not quite as accessible or plastic as native chiefs, or even British Commissioners; and, severest blow of all, that Paul Kruger in Pretoria was not the same man in the capitals of Europe.

The shock to his stubborn pride was terrible. For days he maintained a brooding silence. When he did begin to speak, with his son-in-law Eloff, it was on matters of family and personal business. He evaded as much as possible discussions on the affairs of State. When he mentioned Dr. Leyds, it was without bitterness. Once he let fall a remark that might have been interpreted into a reproach that his State Secretary should have misled him by employing the cautious and equivocal language of diplomacy instead of the blunt, straightforward Taal.

Paul Kruger's faith in, and loyalty to, Dr. Leyds in the supreme hour of disillusionment was one of the most striking traits in the character of one who suspected men and motives as naturally as the wild buck of his native veld suspect and mistrust every creature that is not of their own species.

His refusal to reproach and abuse his trusted servant may have been the outcome of that obstinacy which makes vain men hesitate to admit that they have been deceived and victimised; but, in charity, we prefer to believe that his faith and loyalty were superior to his disappointment.

What may be termed the purely local secret service was less under the direct control of Dr. Leyds than of the nominal chiefs. It attained its full strength and power directly after the Jameson Raid, and its inception while the State Secretary was in Europe engaged on larger business.

It is hardly fair to accept the oft-made suggestion that this department was fostered mainly because it supplied an admirable piece of machinery for the manufacture of

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money-distributing agents. It may be true that no awkward questions were put or allowed when sums of £5,000 to £10,000 were paid over by the Treasurer to Commandant Schutte or Tjaard Kruger, as chiefs of the department; and, if any statement of account was ever delivered, it was a model of conciseness, prepared on the lines of that said to have been presented to the Official Receiver by the young Ne'er-do-well who was given a fresh start for the third and last time by his father on condition that he kept proper accounts.

His statement ran :

| | | | |
|--|--------|----|----|
| Cash received | £1,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Cab to bank to cash cheque | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Postage of letter acknowledging cheque | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Receipt stamp | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Purchase of set of books | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| Out of pockets and incidentals | 999 | 13 | 10 |

But, in justice to those heads of the department who had the difficult task of showing results from a defective machine, it must be admitted that they were more often than not the victims of unscrupulous and more astute conspirators. It is no discredit to these gentlemen to say they were no match for the clever adventurers who took advantage of them. They had to pit their ignorance of a new and novel phase of detective work against the combined brains of some of the cleverest scoundrels of Europe.

For nearly a year a manufactory of bogus conspiracies was carried on in Johannesburg, the brains of the confederacy being an ex-private detective, once well known in London, but then living under an alias on the Rand. He was one of the first to discover that the Secret Service Bureau wanted raw material for the justification of its existence; and he knew how and where to obtain it.

Plot after plot was revealed to the guileless chiefs, but

never fructified; first, because its seed was sterile; secondly, because the motive of the conspirators consisted in making the business of the "to-be-continued-in-our-next" order.

Some of the expedients resorted to to keep up the fraud were unbelievable in their daring.

A genuine case of the suicide of an employee of one of the mining houses was actually utilised to ring down the curtain on one fraud that was beginning to wear thin. The dead man was represented as having blown out his brains on discovering that he was suspected, and likely to be arrested. So cleverly was the story concocted that the house, office and belongings of the suicide were placed under police care, and the friends and the relatives subjected to exasperating espionage and questioning. The conspirators had persuaded the secret service department that this mild mannered bookkeeper was the principal agent in a capitalistic plot for the assassination of Paul Kruger!

An extraordinary coincidence came to light in the private investigation into the death. It was proved that, some months before, the deceased had visited Pretoria on the business of his employers. It being his first sight of the capital, he, not unnaturally, visited some of the places then much talked about. Among them was the President's residence. Like many others, he was surprised at its unpretentious character, and, thinking he had made a mistake and was on private property, turned and left hurriedly. A sentry who had caught the nerve disease induced by the Jameson Raid ran after the retreating visitor, and demanded who he was. The frightened bookkeeper did not understand the Taal, and the sentry knew no English, but he was intelligent enough to notice that his prisoner was very flustered and, as he expressed it, "looked guilty all over."

Fortunately, Lieutenant Tossell, then Chief of the

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Morality Police, happened to be near, and the matter was satisfactorily explained.

As a piece of circumstantial evidence, this incident helped the conspirators greatly, and enabled them to glide gracefully out of their fraud with undamaged characters. Unfortunately, the secret service department were unaware that the conspirators had never heard of the would-be assassin until his death.

The chief of the gang admitted later that it was the most extraordinary and unexpected piece of luck that had ever occurred to him in his variegated career.

When the gang fell out over the distribution of the plunder, one of them made an affidavit that he had been approached by the leader with the object of inducing him to murder the bookkeeper, the inference being that the unfortunate victim of his own act had really been shot by the chief conspirator to give colour to his story.

But there is a limit to everything, even the gullibility of a chief of the old Secret Service Bureau; and the story was not only disbelieved, but the author of the affidavit was told plainly that if he were found in the Transvaal after twenty-four hours he would be provided with accommodation at the fort. He took the hint, and went to Durban, whence he wrote a series of impudent letters to the chiefs of the secret service, taunting them with their incompetency and generally "getting even" with his late colleagues. The last news of him was from Brussels, where he was sentenced to a term of imprisonment for participation in an ingenious jewel fraud.

For more than eighteen months after that landmark in Transvaal history, the Raid, the Secret Service Bureau was kept on the tenterhooks of suspense by an overlapping series of scares. They were for the most part originated by aliens with a view to extracting some of the overflowing gold at the disposal of the chiefs of the depart-

ment, and varied from the most childishly transparent invention to elaborate and well-conceived and engineered bogus conspiracies. X

The disparity between the figures of the arms which the Reformers admitted having smuggled in and of those surrendered formed the nucleus for many fairy stories of impending risings. Even if the secret service chiefs refused to credit a story, there were generally influential members of Kruger's inner cabinet who were disposed to think that there might be "something in it." They were principally those who, when the rumours were going round, had scoffed at the probability of the Raid. Now, on that very human principle of locking the stable door after the "jumping" of the horse, they were extra keen on accepting every rumour that came to their ears. It is an open secret that at least three members of the secret service acted as *agents-provocateurs*, and helped the authors of scare stories to turn them to account. One of them, an Englishman, afterwards justified his share in the work on the principle that all was fair in love and war; and in frightening the Government into spending money to investigate these rumours he was only putting into the pockets of Uitlanders some of the gold extracted from the Reformers in the shape of fines.

The fact that the majority of these bogus informers were Britishers, and that nothing except expense ever came from their information, at last struck Mr. Tjaard Kruger, who had been paying out enormous sums and getting nothing in return.

One day a bright idea occurred to him. Having listened to the story of one of the bearers of special information, he took a very careful and ostentatious note of the name and address of his informant.

"The Government feels," said he, "that you Englishmen who are so kind as to give all this information about your wicked countrymen deserve something more than

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the few pounds you make out of it. So we are going to publish the names of those who helped to put down the conspiracy against the Transvaal—when we have finished with the conspirators."

The slump in information that followed put two-thirds of the private inquiry agents of the bureau on the retired list.

CHAPTER XIII

THE JAMESON RAID FROM THE BOER SIDE

Were the Boers Prepared?—The Woman in it—Melton Prior, Stormy Petrel—The Arming of Uitlanders—A Pound a Day the Lure—Defection of Chief-Detective Trimble—Thieves as Armed Guards—Kruger's Scepticism—Withdrawal of the Johannesburg Police—The Black Peril Averted—Undecipherable Intercepted Telegrams—Kruger Prepares to Ride against Jameson—Some Kruger Apophthegms—Rhodes the Leader—Kruger's Fear of Rhodes and "Groot" Adrian De la Rey—Sir H. Loch's Conciliation—Kruger's Opinions on Milner and Chamberlain—How the Raid Strengthened his Influence

DID the Kruger Government know of the preparations for the Jameson Raid?

This question has often been put and answered with the dogmatic insistence of ignorance—yea and nay. The nearest guess at the truth was made by the late Colonel Frank Rhodes, when the question was put to him at the Commission of Inquiry: "They thought something was going on, but they did not know much."

No harm can now be done to anybody by the statement which we make, with the authority of inside knowledge, that, for a week before Jameson crossed the border, the Executive at Pretoria were in possession of a dozen telegrams that had passed between the Reform Committee—Dr. Jameson, Mr. Rhodes, Major Heaney, Dr. Wolff (who organised the commissariat), Mr. Lionel Phillips, Mr. Hamilton (editor of the *Star*, who was sent to Cape Town to interview Rhodes on the vexed question of the flag), and others whose identity was hidden beneath an alias or code name.

It may also now be admitted that such of those telegrams as were not in cipher or code were unintelligible

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owing to the technical language employed. They read as perfectly genuine communications relating to mining and general business, and were little different from the thousands of ordinary telegrams that passed over the wires every day.

The day before Jameson arrived at Krugersdorp the Executive obtained a copy of the private code-book of the British South African Company, but too late to make much use of it.

As is not unusual in the history of great events, the first definite information that something was brewing came through a woman.

Mr. W. M. Edwards, of Krugersdorp, a prominent townsman and a member of the West Rand Licensing Board, was shown a letter received on December 21st, 1895, by a young Irish lady acting as governess to his children. It was from a young fellow in Rhodesia, the prospective husband, who during several months had been promising to visit his fiancée, but was always disappointed by untoward happenings.

He wrote that unexpected circumstances had arisen which rendered it likely that he would see her at or soon after Christmas. He explained that he had joined the police force, and was at Pitsani awaiting orders to march into the Transvaal. He outlined the coming trouble at Johannesburg, but, lover-like, was too much occupied in discussing the affairs of the girl and himself to devote more attention to the concerns of a nation.

Mr. Edwards immediately went to Pretoria and showed the letter to Paul Kruger. It was not regarded as very important by the President, but, on the advice of Mr. Smidt, the Railway Commissioner, and one or two members of the Executive, inquiries were made by telegraph through the postmaster at Zeerust. Two days later the Field Cornet reported that two suspicious-looking Englanders had been seen climbing telegraph poles in

the veld, but, on finding themselves noticed, had ridden away very rapidly towards the Mafeking border.

This circumstance, taken with the letter, put the Executive on the qui vive, and the border was carefully watched by the local police, and by burghers appointed by the district Field Cornet.

From this time rumours began to come in thick and fast. They all took the form of suspicion against strange Englishmen who were lingering in the district for no special reason, but were suspected of having designs on the telegraph wires. We know now that a wire-cutting contingent did operate from Mafeking. There is an amusing story of one of the cutters getting full of whisky at a wayside store, and being found late at night entangled in a barbed wire fence, which he was snipping, under the impression that he was cutting the telegraph wires! The freak being ascribed to drunkenness, he was not detained, the burghers who found him not having heard any of the rumours of the threatened trouble from across the border.

One of the earliest informers was met at Krugersdorp in the last week of the October preceding the Raid. He was a man who was slightly known to Varley, of Varley's Hotel, through having stayed there *en route* to Mafeking some months before. He was a gaseous, bragging colonial of a familiar type who sought to impress the company at the bar by boasting of his intimacy with any and every person of importance whose name happened to be mentioned. He had been indulging in an alcoholic debauch, and, under the influence, quarrelled with a local official, whom he hinted would not long hold his appointment, as the day of Boer ascendancy was over, and if the official only knew what was locked up in the breast of the speaker he would clear out at once. He continued in this strain for two or three days, but, owing to his condition, few persons paid any attention to him beyond chaffing and

joking. One burgher, however, who may have been a little more prescient than his fellows, thought the matter worth reporting to Pretoria, and, on a visit to the capital a few days later, made a point of seeing a member of the Executive and unburdening himself. But it is safe to surmise that no importance was attached to the communication. Pretoria was not in a timorous humour. Krugerism was at its apotheosis and insolent in its strength. The recent triumph of Boer over Briton in the matter of the commandeering of British subjects for the Malaboch campaign had inspired officialdom with the notion that the Government had nothing to fear from British intervention on behalf of the Uitlanders, and threats of a day of judgment were laughed at as the vain vapourings of angry men.

Viewed in the light of past events, it is surprising how accurate a prophet this braggart of the Krugersdorp canteens proved. If he did not actually know anything, he was a marvellously good guesser. There is reason to believe that he was one of the subordinates employed by Dr. Wolff in his work of arranging depots along the line of the proposed Jameson march, and that at the time of his drunken prognostications he was smarting from the annoyance of having been summarily discharged for taking too much liquor.

A little later another nobody in particular in Johannesburg—a young man engaged in some sort of commission work—used to talk as one having authority of the wonders that were to come. He held forth in private bars, and particularly in the smoke-room of the Park Hotel, where he stayed. Like the Krugersdorp prophet, he received scant honour from his countrymen; but he proved a successful vaticinator, much more so than the other, for his information was more detailed and, in the end, more accurate. His favourite text was the arrival of the late Mr. Melton Prior, the famous artist of the *Illustrated*

London News. "He is a stormy petrel. What is there to bring him to South Africa just now except that he knows something?" was the frequent comment of the prophet; and certainly the presence of the artist was a most fortunate coincidence, for he was in at the beginning and had ample opportunity for seeing every move in the game. But it is useless to attempt to disguise the fact that the bulk of the Uitlanders refused to take the warnings seriously. Those who did were in a great minority, and, outside the inner ring, were persons who did not count. As a matter of fact, the apathy of the majority was always a sore point with the enthusiastic leaders of the anti-Kruger party.

The National Union, an association formed for the purpose of voicing the grievances of the Uitlanders, held monthly public meetings, and, except on the few occasions when a prominent man like Mr. Advocate Wessels was announced to make a special speech, it was always difficult to get an audience. Again and again has the writer, with half a dozen other pressmen and the committee and speakers, waited for an hour for a sufficient number of the public to turn up to justify starting the oratory.

"Are you coming to the meeting?" would be asked of a passer-by, a known Uitlander.

"What meeting?"

"The National Union—here, to-night. Come and help form a crowd."

"No thanks. I'm here for business, not for politics," was the frequent answer.

How little importance the Government attached to the meetings may be gathered from the fact that, though a private note-taker was always told off to listen to the speeches and report to headquarters, as often as not he remained not more than half an hour, relying upon the newspaper reports published next morning.

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The regular attendant on behalf of the Government was a young Afrikaner, who posed as an efficient shorthand writer. We all had grave doubts as to his competency, and on one occasion challenged him to read the notes he had ostentatiously taken. He failed utterly.

"How do you manage to transcribe and prepare your report?" he was asked.

"I've never been asked to do it yet," was the surprising reply.

There is every reason to believe that until Johannesburg was actually under arms, companies drilling openly on Marshall Square, and Andrew Trimble, the chief detective, was publicly enlisting and arming men to fight against the Government, the Pretorian Executive refused to take the matter seriously. They could not, or would not, believe that there was any backbone in the movement, and events proved that they were right.

When it became known that volunteers were to be paid a pound a day for membership of a force whose duties not even the commanders could explain, there was a rush of the unemployed. The Scottish, Bettington's, and an Australian contingent were enrolled and drilled. The hours of drill were so admirably arranged that it was possible for a man to belong to two corps and put in his drill with both. Several enterprising fellows, realising that hay had to be made while the sun shone, joined all three corps, and drew a pound a day from each for ten days. But despite the extra time put in at drill, the martial knowledge gained was amazingly small. It was a standing joke to challenge volunteers to explain the action of the Lee-Metford rifles with which they had been armed. The walls and ceilings of several hotel bars bore testimony to the uncertainty of loaded rifles in the hands of amateurs.

The farcical nature of the business had a delightful illustration one night when a party of twenty guards

left their posts at the west end of the town and held a scratch smoking concert in the hall of the Grand National Hotel by way of protest against the conduct of their captain who had gone off duty early to attend a social gathering. At that very time the Boers were massing round Johannesburg, and the townspeople used to go out to the hills above Doornfontein to look at the distant camp fires of the encircling burghers.

"Nothing can come of it; they have no leaders," was the pregnant comment of Van der Hoven, the Laird of Florida, after watching the Australian contingent drilling on Marshall Square.

He had touched the weak spot in the "flotation," to use the code word for the scheme employed by the Reformers. No one of the public knew who was engineering the business. All believed vaguely that the "Corner House" of Wernher, Beit and Eckstein, also the Goldfields Company, were at the back, but there was a general distrust of capitalistic control. Such of the public who regarded the matter seriously could not forget that the mining magnates had never before manifested any sympathy with the people. Only two years before, when Sir Henry Loch visited Pretoria over the matter of the commandeering of British subjects, and was the recipient of a hostile demonstration by Uitlanders, who considered that he had not backed them up, but, on the contrary, had sided with Kruger, Mr. Lionel Phillips had headed a deputation of mining magnates to the President, "disclaiming all sympathy with the demonstration on the arrival of the High Commissioner, and assuring the President of their support."

In the absence of a declared and recognised leader, Mr. Andrew Trimble, the newly appointed head of the detective force, was looked up to as the man to follow. He never made any claim to the position; it was accorded him spontaneously by the crowd. He became Police

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Dictator and kept order marvellously. The Transvaal police had been withdrawn, and not a Zarp was visible. Their officers, Lieutenant Tossell and Commissioner Pietersen, walked the streets in mufti; a few rowdies took advantage of the apparently undefended state of the town to assert themselves, but they had reckoned without Trimble. He arrested two or three of the ringleaders, tied them over a form in the police station yard, and gave them a taste of a sjambok, well laid on. It may have been distinctly illegal, and was certainly irregular, but the effect was salutary. There was not another case of rowdyism, and for the first time in its history Johannesburg was nearly crimeless for a week. It is no hyperbole to say that Trimble's sjambok, applied at the right time and place, saved the town from an outburst of anarchy.

When the arms were being given out, a notorious leader of the racecourse gang of roughs had the impudence to apply for fifty rifles on behalf of a body of "useful men" whom he could raise. The "useful men" were all members of the gang, and had arranged to hold up certain business premises if the arms had been forthcoming. Only an accident prevented this daring scheme from being carried out. The supply of rifles had run short, the few left being given out to a mine manager who wanted to defend his property. Had he been five minutes later the "useful" gang would have been armed and *en route* for the scene of their proposed raid.

Meanwhile the attention of the authorities was diverted from the Mafeking border to Johannesburg. The Executive had come to the conclusion that there was going to be some sort of trouble; but that the Uitlanders would attempt to use the arms they had was not believed for a moment. "They don't know the barrel from the breech," was the remark of L. D. Wolmarans, the great anti-British member of the First Raad. The President

himself is said to have laughed heartily at the description given him of the drilling of the volunteers. He had no fear of miners armed with rifles in the streets of Johannesburg. They might shoot one another, and probably would; as to any damage to the town—well, it would hurt Uitlanders, not oprecht burghers, for there were very few there. Paul Kruger never loved the great town on the Reef, and the prospect of its being the scene of a serious disturbance did not worry him. He is said to have slept as regularly and as soundly during the week of the Revolution as at any time of his life, retiring to rest at his usual hour, although messengers were coming in and out, and exciting news was expected every moment. If ever Dutch phlegm asserted itself in Paul Kruger it was during that memorable week.

However, certain precautions had been taken. The police were kept in the jail and fort on Hospital Hill, with carbines and revolvers handy. That they were in a state of funk is to express the facts mildly. As a body, the Johannesburg police were just then at the height of their unpopularity, particularly with the miners, who formed the bulk of the bearers of arms as members of the three corps. There had been a succession of cases in which the Zarps (Zuid Afrikansche Republiek Politie) had figured as tyrants and bullies, though in common fairness it must be admitted that honours were fairly divided between the miners and the police. During the first day or two of the rising, before the police were taken off the streets, there had been much rough chaff and many threats indulged in at the expense of the Zarps on duty, and at least one officer was convinced that the police would be the subjects of the first attack if matters grew more serious than they looked. Several, in fact continuous, councils of war were held at the Fort, and a plan of campaign agreed up. This was to begin by surrounding the crowd that remained day and night

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outside the headquarters of the Reform Committee at the offices of the Consolidated Gold Fields Company, arresting a few ringleaders and kraaling the crowd in the old jail at Doornfontein. An alternative project was to arrest one of the corps as it formed up for drill on Marshall Square; but the police shied at this extreme because the volunteers carried rifles.

A latent and ever-present source of anxiety was the possible conduct of the eighty thousand Kaffirs on the mines. No one was certain which side they would take. The Reform Committee did a sensible thing in forcibly closing all the canteens on the mines, and placing a guard over known stores of liquor likely to be attacked by the natives, who were also kept out of the streets and not permitted to form groups. But the old residents were gravely apprehensive on the subject, and most of them took special precautions to protect their families. Within a week there was not a revolver to be purchased at any store in town, and more than one of the volunteers sold their rifles to timid householders, and dodged the sergeant for the rest of the week. The Pretorian authorities were quite correct when they alleged that all the rifles served out were not accounted for at the surrender.

Of the discreditable conduct of the large party of Cornish miners who dragged the women and children out of the railway carriages and took their places in the mad rush out of Johannesburg, sufficient has been said, as every Cornishman in the Transvaal agrees. Unfortunately, the punishment, as is too often the case, fell upon the innocent, and Cousin Jacks who remained had to share the opprobrium that rightly belonged to individuals and not a class. There were other and many exhibitions of cowardice, which, however, were redeemed by humour.

There was, for instance, the case of a party of Russian Jews who left Johannesburg as their ancestors left Egypt,

carrying their possessions. They marched westward with the idea of reaching Kimberley. Outside Potchefstroom they were met by Field Cornet Tom Dirk and a party of burghers, who armed rapidly to repel what they fancied was an attacking party of Johannesburgers.

The spokesman of the invaders was eagerly eloquent in his assurance that they were all ardent supporters of the Boer Government, and had left Johannesburg to show their disapproval of the unseemly disloyalty.

"You are really supporters of the Government?" the Field Cornet demanded.

The whole party were prepared to swear by every binding oath that could be administered.

"Very well, then; to-morrow morning at ten come into the town and see me at my office, when you will all receive rifles and can go back to help the Government in Johannesburg—otherwise, there is room in the jail."

By ten o'clock next morning there was not a Russian Jew within twenty miles of Potchefstroom.

In the outlying portions of Johannesburg more than one innocent Kaffir became victims to the chronic funk of men and women whose terror of the native was inherent. The manager of a business in town, being delayed after dark, sent one of the store Kaffirs with a note of explanation to his wife, who had barricaded herself in her house at Booyens. Finding the place in darkness and getting no response to his knocks, the native made a tour of inspection, and was astonished by getting a bullet fired through the kitchen window. Fortunately, the lady's fright spoiled her aim, and a week in hospital and a present of a sovereign put matters right.

Others were not so lucky. Two natives who loitered round a house in expectation of getting a word with the native cook were treated as enemies by two frightened householders, and left for dead in the road; and, if rumour is to be relied on, at least half a dozen Kaffirs

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were shot on sight on approaching isolated houses in the outskirts of the town. No official cognisance was taken of the affairs at the time. Afterwards it was too late.

It was not until December 28th, three days before Jameson crossed into the Transvaal, that the Pretoria Executive began systematically to intercept and study the numerous telegrams being received by the Reform Committee. Truth impels the admission that very little was learned from them. Unless it was known what was meant by "flotation," "polo tournament," "cutting" and other words and phrases specially adopted to refer to the business of the rising, the rest of the message was meaningless, although expressed in plain language. A member of the President's family, who was present when a batch of intercepted telegrams was discussed, made some wonderfully good shots at a correct interpretation, and twice got what we now know was the true reading; but as his interpretation was not in line with that of a member of the Executive, it was dismissed as "out."

The President was less concerned about finding out what the Reformers were wiring over the country than in knowing whether they were intercepting his messages. Someone told the President that an appliance had been observed at one of the windows of the Gold Fields Buildings which was evidently intended for tapping wires. The President got very interested in this, and sent for a telegraphist from the Pretoria office, who explained to the old gentleman the principles and process of tapping telegraph wires. He had, he said, heard about the thing before, but had paid no attention to it. For nearly an hour, when his fate was in the balance, and it looked as if his reign was over, Paul Kruger sat calmly smoking and listening to a technical explanation of a difficult phase of telegraphy.

Only once did the old man show any excitement. That

was when he heard that Andrew Trimble had gone over to the Reformers, and was actually arming Uitlanders to fight burghers. Trimble had been the special protégé of Advocate Ewald Esselen. He got the President to consent to the appointment with difficulty.

"I told you so," was Kruger's comment on hearing that the chief detective had turned traitor. He sent for Esselen, and that gentleman had a very warm quarter of an hour.

It happened that at that period there was an unusually large proportion of Britishers in the police and prison service. The governor of the Johannesburg jail, Tom Menton, was an old British soldier, one of the deserters of 1880; the jailers at Barberton, Krugersdorp, Potchefstroom, Ermelo and one or two other places were Britishers—naturalised burghers, it is true, but none the less Britishers. In the police, "high up," were Lieutenant Tossell, really a Devonshire man, but a naturalised burgher for many years; Captain Pieter Heuck, once chief constable of Johannesburg; Robert Ferguson, late chief detective of Johannesburg; Beattie, a Scotsman; Clark, Fox, and many more. The first impulse of the President was to suspend every one of these officials; but Mr. Esselen pointed out certain legal and diplomatic objections, and the idea was abandoned. Still, the old gentleman was furious, and could be heard as far off as the next street expressing his views on the folly of trusting Britishers.

A very curious coincidence occurred at this time, which caused considerable uneasiness to the Reformers, who, well as they thought they understood the Boers, proved completely at sea over this matter.

The quarterly Nachtmaal, or religious festival for the Pretoria district, was due to begin on December 26th, but for some reason, not very clear, an unusually large number of burghers appeared in the capital two days

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before the opening date. This fact was immediately wired to the Reform Committee in Johannesburg, and by them to Rhodes at Cape Town. "Boers massing at Pretoria. Have guessed something," was the text of the message. As a matter of fact, it is a question whether one among those early arrivals had the slightest notion that any trouble was ahead. A predikant, preaching later in the light of fuller knowledge, adverted to the circumstance, seeing in it the guiding hand of Providence.

"God," he said, "had secretly moved the hearts of these oprecht and godly burghers to proceed to Pretoria, so that in the hour of need the President would be succoured by his most loyal supporters."

When Kruger learned that Jameson had crossed, and had captured his grandson, Sarel Eloff, who rode out to warn the raiders that they would be treated as hostiles and repelled by force, he ordered a horse to be brought to the Presidency, and announced his intention of going out at the head of his burghers, although he had not been in the saddle for twenty years. A horse was brought, but before the old warrior could carry out his intention, news arrived that Jameson had been stopped at Krugersdorp and was floundering on the wrong side of Prinsloo's vlei.

The direction taken by the Raiders after the repulse at the Queen's Battery was at right angles to the road, towards Randfontein and the group of mines controlled by Mr., now Sir, J. B. Robinson.

When he heard this, the President remarked:

"Do they expect Robinson's men to help them? In these days I suspect everyone with an Englishman name. But Robinson isn't much of an Englishman."

The equivocal phrase meant that J. B. Robinson was not British-born, but a Cape Colonial, and sympathetic with the Transvaal Boers. This remark, like many which have been interpreted to the prejudice of Paul Kruger,

carries a very different meaning when expressed in the Taal.

It is a matter for regret that no reliable reporter was present to place on record some of the *obiter dicta* of the old President during the week of the Raid excitement. He seems to have excelled himself as an utterer of epigrammatic philosophisings and criticisms on men and things; but, unfortunately, no two persons give the same version, and, in the absence of any authoritative court of appeal, it will be safer to resist the temptation to make quotations that would provoke challenge.

There is one point on which all who had an opportunity of judging agree: that except for the outbursts of feeling over Trimble's defection, he preserved an astonishing equanimity. It was the impassivity of the person who has no uneasiness or doubt as to the result. The tenor of his comments was that the Johannesburgers would not go to the assistance of the invaders because they were not unanimously enthusiastic. In the improbable event of their "going out shooting" he was satisfied that "my burghers" would be more than a match. He had also a not very exalted opinion of Uitlander courage.

Much the same attitude was taken by old British-born residents, though they had, for reasons of policy, to be discreet in expressing their opinions. One doctor, who knew both Boer and Briton on the strength of thirty years' acquaintance, was not so reticent. One evening at the Rand Club he put his opinion into words, and there was a storm. Half a dozen members took offence, and it was only the arrival of startling news from the headquarters of the Reform Committee that averted trouble.

When Bettington's Horse—the first locally formed corps—returned with the news that they had been unable to assist Jameson, the doctor, who was standing in a

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prominent position near the club, indulged in an emphatic "I told you so!" but employed other phraseology more in keeping with the temper of the crowd. This time he had more sympathisers and received no threats of the guerdon of a traitor.

A significant corroboration of President Kruger's views on the apathetic attitude of the bulk of the Johannesburgers was provided by the absence of quarrels, excited discussions and the ebullitions of feeling that are usually common when a number of the public are feeling deeply on a subject. Whatever may have been the unanimity in the club, there is no question that outside it the public expressed their opinions very freely and variously. It would have been difficult for an earnest inquirer in the shape of a perfectly unbiased newspaper correspondent, to gauge public opinion accurately. The actively enthusiastic bore a very small proportion to the crowd. Here and there a man would be holding forth in the centre of a group, but his auditors were generally listless and rather disposed to chaff and banter. From first to last the public felt that they were merely outsiders who did not count in the calculations of the small but all-powerful coterie of financiers sitting in secret conclave in the board-room of a huge mining corporation, arranging plans in almost contemptuous disregard of the shareholders, actual and prospective, floating a new company without issuing a prospectus.

It is generally conceded, now that passion has cooled and partisanship dissolved, that the financiers were themselves the cause of the failure of the reform movement. True, their co-operation was essential from the financial point of view. The distressed Uitlanders of their own volition would not have put up among them the price of a single Maxim gun; they accepted the aid of the mining magnates just as the poor inventor agrees to assign nineteen-twentieths of his epoch-making invention

to any person who will provide the capital necessary for putting it upon the market. But as the inventor fears and hates the man behind him, so the Rand Uitlanders feared the Rand magnates. No one knew for a certainty who was behind the movement, but everybody in the street was certain that financial rather than political motives were paramount. If a leader had come forward fairly free from the taint of association with the Rand financial houses, the public would have enthused, and the history of South Africa would have been altered. The one name that would have united the discordant elements and won over the diffident was the one that was purposely and successfully withheld. Until it was an established fact in the street that Dr. Jameson was marching on to Johannesburg, the name of his chief and backer, Cecil John Rhodes, was never mentioned. It is not too much to say that the engineers-in-chief of the conspiracy proved past masters in some essentials of diplomacy; notably in keeping their greatest moves secret. Results—the only test—showed that the greatest tactical error was made in this direction, which is a platitude, but not always recognised as such.

Kruger is said by one or two in a position to have been favoured with his confidence to have suspected Rhodes from the first; but, on the other hand, circumstantial evidence points to a different conclusion. It may be that he had Rhodes in his mind and eye at the time of the genesis of the reform movement with the commandeering incident, but that would only prove that the Colossus was a standing *bête noire* with the old man. Kruger is reported to have said that there were only four persons he feared. They were God, the Devil, Cecil Rhodes and Groot Adriaan De la Rey. The latter was the famous Stellaland freebooter; the adjective "groot" (great) referred to his magnificent physique; the fear was that engendered by De la Rey's dominating

personality. He had great influence over Kruger, and generally got the better of him in any discussion on policy. The story attributed to various distinguished polemical Frenchmen may be paraphrased and applied to these twain. De la Rey always confuted the President while with him, but after he had left the stoep the President had thought of an answer that would have paralysed Adriaan.

It is said by some who knew the two men intimately that, had Adriaan de la Rey been alive at the time, there would have been no ultimatum, and therefore no war in 1899.

There can be no question that the flabby attitude taken by the British Government or Sir Henry Loch, or both, in the matter of the commandeering of British subjects in 1894, stiffened the back of Paul Kruger more than any diplomatic victory, real or imaginary, that he ever obtained. His unconcealed jubilation at the poor response given to the appeal of the afflicted Uitlanders by the British Government resulted in a new joke being added to the stock of not always pleasing pleasantries with which he greeted visitors from other countries:

"Are you one of the men who go crying to your Government when you don't like my land?"

To an American of some distinction he remarked, in reply to a conventional compliment—"Your wonderful country, Mr. President!"—"Yes, you call it wonderful to my face. I wonder what you will say about it after you have been in the company of those Johannesburg Uitlanders? But I'm not sure that your Government would listen to you."

"Go and cry to your Government," was the half-jocular, half-evasive retort given by the President to the writer on complaining that his journal was entitled to a larger share of official advertisements than it received.

"That grievance is hardly important enough," was

our rather injudicious rejoinder, which was countered by a growling, "Not important enough! Then you can't be much of an Englishman. I hear some of your people are going to complain to your Government because our sun rises sooner than yours. Isn't that important enough?"

After the Raid this jibe was placed on the retired list, and succeeded by "Are you a Rhodes' man?" This remained in active service till the war-cloud appeared on the horizon. Then a visitor would be pointedly asked, "Are you one of Mr. Milner's men?" or "Mr. Chamberlain's" (Chamberlain). President Kruger had a peculiar habit of coupling people. On meeting a person previously introduced, he would invariably mention the name of the introducer, and generally with the emphasis on him, leaving the impression that it was he whom the President had delighted to honour.

Before he met Lord Milner at the Bloemfontein Conference, President Kruger very rarely referred to him. He altogether failed to realise the individuality of that gentleman, who was only a name, and that name merely a sign for a Government official who signed certain documents. Any opinion he may have formed of him during that memorable and fatal week was never expressed. Events of vast importance moved so rapidly afterwards that individuals were lost in action.

There is only one utterance of the President that may be accepted as authoritative and as giving a clue to his estimate of the character of his great protagonist. Mr. Hendrik Schoeman, a power in Pretoria when Krugerism was in the ascendant, told one of the writers that the President complained that Lord Milner spoke like a man who did not want to hear what the other one was saying or had to say. "He came to make war, and if I had agreed to give him all he wanted, and the independence of the country as well, he would still have quarrelled with me for not giving enough."

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At the time Mr. Chamberlain became Colonial Secretary the Colonial papers published the usual biographical sketches, and one of them told a story which was probably invented, of his sending a man at great expense to some distant part of the world to collect a rare orchid. This story was repeated to Kruger by a burgher at one of his early coffee receptions.

Kruger had never heard of an orchid, and asked what sort of thing it was. Someone present gave the information and enlarged on the magnitude of the prices paid for the flower. A copy of the paper containing a portrait of Mr. Chamberlain was sent for and shown to the President. It was a familiar portrait in which the subject wears both the distinguishing orchid and monocle.

Kruger looked at the picture for quite a minute, then remarked: "What foolishness for a man to give so much money for so small a thing! And then he can only see half of that for he has only one eye!"

If the Jameson Raid produced in Paul Kruger one feeling stronger than all others it was that secret elation and satisfaction which probably every human being feels when, after a long period of opposition and abuse from friends and enemies alike, the opinions he has held in face of the majority prove to be right. Kruger had an instinctive belief in the natural perfidy and treachery of Britishers. He was too discreet to express his opinion openly, but to those who could read his many cryptic sayings, often let slip under the guise of a joke, it was well understood that the old Dictator regarded the stock phrase "British fair play" as a sarcasm.

The Raid more than confirmed this obstinate view, and who can wonder?

But there was another aspect, apart from the gratification of the personal vanity that comes from being proved a good prophet. The treacherous character of

the Raid strengthened Kruger in the good opinion of those leaders among the growing young Afrikaner party who were disposed to discount the judgment of the President on the score of increasing age. Deference to age and experience has ever been a pronounced Boer trait. The young Afrikaner party found it the greatest obstacle to the spread of their movement, and had seized with avidity on the several admitted blunders of Kruger to emphasise their point that there was a limit to patriarchal supremacy of intellect. General Ben Viljoen used to play on this theme very adroitly in his widely read journal *Ons Volk*, and his subtle depreciation of the Presidential judgment was beginning to produce in the minds of even ardent Krugerites that dubiety which is the forerunner of mistrust and final scepticism.

To his old friends he repeated with jubilant glee, "What think you of Rhodes now? What did I say about him always?" Another variant was, "These are the Uitlanders you wished me to give the franchise to!" To someone who ventured an opinion that the fines inflicted on the Reformers were not large enough, and that the State ought to benefit more from the treachery of their enemies, Kruger replied, "Money is good, but there are other things as valuable. These Raiders have given me the best reason for never trusting Englishers again."

Krugersdorp, the capital of the West Rand, seventeen miles west of Johannesburg, and six hours from Pretoria, as the Boers reckon—thirty-six miles—has, since the declaration of independence and particularly since gold has been worked on the Rand, been a centre of interest—political and historical. Its people have, or at least up till October 11th, 1899, had, an exalted idea of its importance, and not without reason, for there have been few history-making events in the Transvaal that had not their inception or, at least, early acceptance and

nourishment in the little dorp that takes its name from the grim old Dopper President. It has been claimed by the too zealous that it was the favourite dorp of Paul Kruger, a mistake for which the name of the place is responsible. Its pre-eminence was attributable to the fact that it was the President's favourite dumping-ground for superfluous officials. It was a kind of private preserve; therefore in one respect a favourite, if not favoured, dorp of the President.

With a few conspicuous and satisfactory exceptions, every official there was either a relation or a special nominee of Paul Kruger, and at most two members of the Executive. *Pro rata*, there were more officials to the acre in Krugersdorp than in any town or district in the whole of South Africa. The old joke which emphasised the impossibility of throwing a brick into the air without its falling upon an official is feebly inapplicable to the dorp. It would have fallen upon a crowd, and not a man of them would have been hurt. A more hard-headed set of batteners on the public never existed. They were to a man the antithesis and contradiction of the popular idea that a Government favourite is a soft-headed creature whose working hours are occupied in dodging work. The Krugersdorp civil servants were marvels of industry. It is safe to say that there was not a man among them who did not study thoroughly the laws and regulations controlling his particular office. That is why so few of them were ever caught in the act of turning their knowledge to personal benefit. They knew more about the business than the office inspector, who was a child in their hands. His visits of espionage and inspection afforded the officials much the same delight as the futile efforts of the ancient apple woman, who, in a once-familiar popular picture, is depicted hobbling after a monkeyish youngster running off with an apple while a dozen of his confederates are looting the stall.

In the rare and unlikely event of a culprit being caught he had only to run whining to Pretoria, and if Paul Kruger did not remove the inspector, kind-hearted old Piet Joubert would exercise his influence and get the threatened punishment averted. Piet was the guardian angel of Krugersdorp officialdom. His interest in the dorp was paternal, patriarchal, and his irregular visits as the guests of minor officials not only promoted a profound sense of security, but exalted the lowly subordinate to the equality of his chief.

Hence came that beatific brotherhood which characterised Krugersdorp officialdom, and enabled it to paraphrase the song of the dragoons in *Patience*, and declare with truth that Krugersdorp officials were linked in friendly tether, and in the fight for loot all fought the foe together: "And every mother's son prepared to fight and fall is; the enemy of one the enemy of all is." Their brotherly unanimity was never better illustrated than on the memorable occasion when the newly appointed and, consequently, zealous Chief of Police ordered a parade of the men for half an hour earlier than suited them. They obeyed promptly, because a train was due for Pretoria at that early hour. Thither they proceeded, laid their grievances before the President, and brought back notice of the recall of the Chief. In order to give point to their simple republican views of equality they insisted that the notice should be served upon the disgraced Chief by the youngest and latest-joined private in the force; and it was.

All this is prefatory to the general statement that, owing to their peculiar hold upon Pretoria, Krugersdorpers were the best-informed officials in the Transvaal. If they did not suggest a change of policy they were the first to know when one was pending; and as knowledge is power, and they knew how to utilise special and exclusive information, it is not surprising that Krugersdorp officials

were looked to as able to give a lead when rumours of fresh Pretorian eccentricity began to be whispered.

That the assertive little dorp justified itself over the Raid is not open to dispute, though to this day there is justifiable soreness on the part of some of the older burghers that they and theirs never got full credit for the leading part they took. Krugersdorp burghers were alone responsible for repelling and capturing Jameson's Raiders; yet history has perpetuated the injustice of non-recognition by putting the scene of the final act at Doornkop, instead of on the actual spot, seven miles nearer Krugersdorp, the farm Vlakfontein.

It was the local reporter for the *Johannesburg Star* who was responsible for this geographical error. Deceived by the translucent atmosphere, which makes things appear nearer than they are, he made allowances, as he believed, for this factor, and overdid it. Brink, the owner of Vlakfontein, never forgot or forgave this blunder. As an oprecht burgher he would have rejoiced in the reflected glory of being acclaimed the owner of the spot where Boer righteousness overcame rooinek villany. He sent a letter of protest and correction to the *Star*, but it went into the waste-paper basket. In revenge Brink, who was the leading potato grower in the Transvaal, and supplied all Johannesburg, put up his prices five shillings a sack. The Uitlanders paid it, but continued to talk of the battle of Doornkop instead of Vlakfontein.

He tried one other revenge. Though the public refused to acknowledge the historic claims of Vlakfontein under its proper name, they visited and trampled it in thousands. At last the worm turned. Spying one Sunday a party of mounted strangers on his property, he called up his Kaffirs, headed off the invaders, and corralled them in his cattle kraal, fastening the gate and keeping them prisoners while he explained the law of trespass, aired his grievance on the deprivation of his dues in the

matter of correct nomenclature, and demanded the names of the party.

The leader gave his—"Lord Ffrench."

Brink wrote it down dubiously.

"And yours?" to the next.

"Marquis de Beusy."

Brink wrote it, still more hesitatingly.

"And yours?"

"Count de Sarigny."

Brink did not write. He spoke:

"It's like you damned Britishers; you miscall my place Doornkop, and you miscall yourself lords and counts." Then, turning to the fourth man, "I suppose you're the Prince of Wales?" he remarked bitingly.

He was not, but he also owned a title, and gave it.

This was too much for Brink.

"You're a lot of impostors, and I shall keep you here till I send to Krugersdorp for the police and give you into custody for trespass and damage. I'll teach you to remember the right name of my place and your own proper names."

The party protested, decorously and judiciously, warning the irate burgher that there was also an offence known as unlawful arrest and imprisonment.

Brink was not in the humour to discuss legal points with men who refused to give their proper names. He put a guard and fresh obstacles on the gate of the kraal, and sent into the dorp for the police.

The party were duly escorted as prisoners to Krugersdorp and charged, and, after considerable delay, released on bail.

Before the case could come on at the Landdrost's Court, Brink learned that his prisoners had not deceived him as to their names. He saw them on a series of writs claiming heavy damages for unlawful arrest. Being a man of substance, and having no desire to squander

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it on lawyers, he listened to reason and the promptings of a Boer conscience, and compromised the matter by an apology and certain payments which were not outrageous, the Rooineks not being vindictive, but feeling that the fun they had had at Brink's expense was fair compensation for the indignity put upon them.

Krugersdorp had early news of the approach of the Raiders. Pretoria was fairly prompt in wiring, but the landdrost was two hours ahead of the official telegram. Cyclists played an important and valuable part. They rode out from the dorp along the Mafeking road, and scouted from the kopjes and other points of vantage. It says little for the Raiders that they saw only the two cyclists who came straight up to them along the main road. When Willoughby's official letter was brought into the dorp by one of the cyclists, advising that the women and children should be placed in safety as the town would be shelled, all was in readiness. The Dutch Reformed Church, a spacious building well off the line of advance, was selected as the laager by the landdrost. He had been anticipated in his choice. When the women and children got inside the building they found a woman crouching beneath a seat. When she was brought out she stood revealed a leading townsman, who had, like a thoughtful husband, taken no chances of leaving his wife a widow. He had borrowed her clothes, and left her and the children at home.

It is better not to say whether he was Boer or Briton. He paid the penalty by social ostracism, and died of fright five years later, when a refugee in Durban, on hearing that the Boers were expected to capture the town.

They were a variegated party of burghers who first responded to the call to arms outside the Landdrost's Court. Among the seventy who formed the van only twenty carried Martini rifles. Nearly every pattern of

firearm ever used in 'Africa was represented, except the flint lock. Elephant-guns were numerous, but there was no ammunition for them; even the owners of Martinis who had a packet of cartridges had to share them with burghers who had guns but nothing to put into them.

The greatest fiasco of all was the artillery. Two four-pounders of the Staats Artillerie were sent down, and would have done some damage at Doornkop but for the forgetfulness of someone in authority. There was no sponging-rod, and before one could be extemporised the fight was over. By an odd coincidence the gunners in charge were also before Ladysmith in charge of the Long Tom whose breech was mysteriously abstracted. They were sent to Pretoria for trial by court-martial, but the witnesses who were prepared to make very compromising allegations against them disappeared as mysteriously on the way up. Strangers to the country have often marvelled at the old Boer system of imprisoning native witnesses and releasing the accused on bail. White witnesses had such an unaccountable knack of disappearing in serious cases that the Government were rightly fearful lest the Kaffirs should exercise their imitative faculty and do likewise. Hence the apparent incongruity, which, like most Boer customs, had a basis of justification for it.

So many hard things have been said against Krugersdorp officials that common justice demands that full acknowledgment should be made of the fact that when the call to arms went round, and the proximity of Jameson became obvious and dangerous, not a man shirked duty. With unanimous promptitude they recognised the necessity for giving the alarm to the burghers in the outlying districts, particularly in those farthest away from the line of route. There was mounting in hot haste, and friendly rivalry as to who should be the first to warn

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certain burghers farthest from the scene. Unfortunately the burghers whose services were considered most valuable lived on the most remote farms, but this fact did not deter young officialdom. Distance became as naught, and the four young Afrikaners who rode to warn "Groot" Adriaan de la Rey covered the distance in record time, arriving well nigh neck and neck.

"Why did four of you come?" asked the astonished Adriaan.

"Man, but one of us might have been shot by the Rooineks on the way, and there would have been no one to call you to help keep off Jameson," was the answer.

Another Boer characteristic came out prominently on that memorable day. It has ever been the rule and custom of the young Afrikaner to take his cue from his elders, and never attempt to lead or forestall them. The old tradition was fully observed. Of the sixty burghers who held the Queen's Battery and received the ineffective fire from Jameson's rifles and Maxims, the bulk were old men. The youngsters exhibited admirable restraint and self-effacement until Jameson had been captured. When Sarel Eloff called for volunteers to compose the escort of the prisoners on their march to Pretoria, half the day was spent in rejecting too enthusiastic youngsters, eager to parade in Pretoria as the saviours of the independence of Ons Land.

Mention of the Queen's Battery recalls the amusing misconception rife in England at the time. The public not unreasonably took it for granted that the Queen's Battery was really a fort or gun battery. One of the witnesses at the Old Bailey on the trial of the Raiders was asked how many guns were at the battery. Taking the guns to mean rifles, he answered truthfully about sixty. The court ceased to wonder that Jameson should fail in the face of such formidable opposition.

Another item in connection with the Queen's Battery is worthy of mention. The spot was admirably adapted to the purpose of defence and attack. It stood on rising ground, about fifty feet above the level road along which the Raiders advanced, and immediately along the side of it, the Boers, lying behind the shelters extemporised out of the small iron tram skeps used for carrying away the tailings, had a clear view and range. Behind them the hill sloped downwards, affording perfect shelter for their horses. The Raiders' Maxims opened fire on the battery at a range of five hundred yards. Yet, marvellous to relate, the tall buildings of corrugated iron on the hill and in a direct line behind the Boers bore the marks of less than a dozen bullets. Not a man was hit, and even the iron skeps had to be searched carefully for signs of a shot. The explanation was that of Majuba: the rifles were all sighted too high.

One of the writers examined over three hundred of the rifles captured from the Raiders. In nearly every case the magazine was clogged with hair from the horses' manes.

There is an incident connected with the surrender of Jameson which has not been generally known. He and his surviving officers and men were prisoners on the Market Square at Krugersdorp when there arrived a party of Boers from the Waterberg district. Owing to the distance of their farms from the scene they did not reach Krugersdorp in time to take part in the final action at Vlakfontein, and heard particulars of the Raid for the first time. Their indignation was great. They rode round the disarmed prisoners in menacing style, pointing their rifles at them and expressing their feelings forcibly. It was a mild-looking old burgher with a white flowing beard who suggested, "Let's shoot them now." The idea was caught up and passed round.

General Ben Viljoen, then Field Cornet of Krugers-

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dorp, heard it and "went for" the patriarchal proposer in his best style of vituperative comment. His remonstrances irritated the old men. They were outraged at the sight of a young man speaking in such style to one old enough to be his grandfather, and for a minute it was touch and go.

A post office clerk took in the situation and ran for Cronje, who was in the landdrost's office. The old general came out promptly, dismissed Viljoen, and reproached the patriarch in judiciously chosen language. The crisis was averted. The Waterberg Boers rode round the square firing their rifles into the air, causing something like a panic among prisoners and spectators, and then off-saddled.

It is a perfectly understood thing to-day that but for Cronje there would have been a massacre on Krugersdorp market square on the opening day of 1896.

CHAPTER XIV

BOER PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

Boers did not Arm before the Jameson Raid—Shortness of Supply of Arms and Ammunition—Commission Sent to Europe to Select and Purchase Arms—Creusot Guns Arrive at Pretoria—Precautions for Secrecy—Did the British Government Know?—The Cabal against the Mauser Rifle—Hostility to English-named Burghers—Flag Signaling and English Bugle Calls Practised by Boers—Reorganisation of Magazine Master's Office—Boer Emissaries Visit the Neighbouring States—Adoption of the English Range-finder—Did Leyds Believe his own Stories?

THE question whether the Boers were long preparing for the war of 1899-1903 has given rise to much recriminatory and futile discussion. Self-constituted authorities on both sides have cited what they considered evidence in support of their views, which evidence is in both instances capable of other interpretations. One thing may be accepted as settled, namely that there is no reasonable foundation for the assertion made by several persons who carry weight, that the Boers began arming before the Jameson Raid.

It is an undoubted fact that in 1894 the burghers had good cause for complaining that the Government was remiss in the matter of granting them facilities for keeping up that supply of arms and ammunition which the *grondwet* and ancient custom demanded of all *oprecht* burghers of the State. Again and again at the semi-official reviews known as *Wapenschouws* there were sore complaints from the burghers on this score, and in at least one instance the burghers of a District refused to respond to the call to a *Wapenschouw* on the ground that they had no weapons to show; that they had made frequent

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applications to the Field Cornets for the right to purchase rifles and ammunition at the reduced rate allowed by the Government, but had got no satisfaction.

The writer was present at a Wapenschouw in the Krugersdorp District when the grievance was manifested in a tiresomely repeated joke. Each marksman was exhorted by his fellows as he went to the target to be careful to make his cartridges last out, as there were no more in Pretoria.

When the various corps of vrvilligers, or volunteers, were formed, much delay took place in equipping them, and several corps never came to fruition owing to the difficulty of getting supplies from the Government.

About this time the Staats Artillerie was also in a very neglected condition. When a band was organised and a sum of money voted for new instruments, many burghers protested that the Government would be doing better by providing arms than music.

So late as the Malaboch Campaign, in 1894, the guns of the Staats Artillerie were very poor affairs, so poor that old burghers regarded them as contemptible and useless. Certainly they did very little useful work during that campaign beyond scaring the natives with their noise and keeping the gunners in a state of nervous apprehension as to whether they would "go off" when wanted. When two of them had to be left bogged in a vlei, the opinion of the burghers was that they were not worth recovering, and the artillerymen had to submit to much irritating chaff on their return to Pretoria. Efforts were made to suppress the story of the fiasco, but it leaked out, and did much to confirm the opinion of the older burghers that artillery was a useless and over-estimated weapon of offence.

It is quite true that during 1894 General Joubert was much occupied in sampling various types of arms; but it was the natural outcome of the growing discontent on the part of the insufficiently armed burghers.

Stories of the wondrous efficacy of the Lee-Metford rifle used by the Mashonaland Pioneers had circulated among the Boers, and a few specimens had been tried by some of the best Boer shots. There was a growing feeling that a new weapon was needed to take the place of the Martini-Henry, which was the official rifle, and General Joubert was instructed by the Executive to examine and report upon it. If approved, it would be stocked and served out to such burghers as desired to exchange their Martinis for one.

Another reason for devoting attention to the subject at this particular period was that a large number of Government rifles were found in the possession of Malaboch's people. There had been during the past four or five years a recrudescence of gun-running; and it was believed that not only were the bulk of the contraband rifles Martinis, but that the cheaper weapons, specially manufactured for the illicit native trade, were made to take Martini cartridges.

This was a very serious matter, and the Government were fully justified in taking steps to put a check on what threatened to become a national danger. This, then, was the mainspring of that special attention given to Boer armaments at the period just antecedent to the Jameson Raid.

That event should have provided an object-lesson on the subject of the Boer equipment. The writer mixed with the Boers who formed the repelling force at the Queen's Battery. They numbered less than seventy men, and he counted among them no less than eight distinct types of rifle. Several burghers complained that they had only been able to fire a few shots, as their small supply of ammunition gave out, and there was no means of replenishing it, as it was of a special kind.

Another incident not noted at the time throws some light on this matter, and confirms our statement that so

far from being well armed before the Jameson Raid the Government reserve was at its lowest.

Young Dannie Theron, who won fame during the last war as a daring train wrecker and cutter of the British line of communications, began his public career at Krugersdorp, where he started practice as a law agent, by submitting President Kruger to the worst, and probably the first, heckling he had ever experienced.

The occasion was one of the President's official visits, and Dannie, who was a member of the Radical Young Afrikaner party, appalled the old burghers and made the President white with rage by putting and demanding an answer to certain questions that it was not policy for Paul Kruger to satisfy. The innuendo was that the presidential professions of profound anxiety for the welfare of "My Burghers" were not borne out by his acts. One question was this:

"Why do you not see that your burghers are able to buy new rifles and sufficient ammunition as they are expected to? Many of them have to borrow a rifle from a Kaffir when they go to a Wapenschouw."

This was intended to be severely cutting, and a hint that the natives were secretly acquiring arms, but it fell flat, though a few burghers laughed.

Paul Kruger, who by this time was very angry, replied tartly, "He would be no oprecht burgher who went to a Kaffir for a rifle."

Then, after a sneer at Theron's youthful appearance, and an inquiry as to whether he could shoot as straight as he talked, the President added:

"I know that some of my burghers are not satisfied with the rifles they buy so cheaply from the Government, but we have not many. Those who want new ones very much should tell their Field Cornet, but they should not all ask at once."

This occurred in or about August following the Raid.

It was not till November, 1896, that the Transvaal Government received its first consignment of new rifles. They were of a German pattern which General Joubert had approved, but they had not pleased certain of Kruger's intimates—men like Hendrik Schoeman and Adriaan de la Rey, whose opinion the President always considered and sometimes acted upon. The intention was to serve them out on trial to certain burghers and take their opinion. In the meantime a committee of three, which included young "Schelm" David van der Merwe, who posed as an authority on arms on the strength of having won a rifle shooting prize while a medical student at Edinburgh, went to Germany to examine and study rifles and big guns.

This expedition was memorable because it nearly brought about a rupture between the President and the great Abel Erasmus, father of Major Erasmus, Chief of the Staats Artillerie. The father wanted to know why his son was not on the Commission. He was doubtless influenced by the knowledge that there were fat pickings on Commissions of this kind, and as a good parent he had his son's interests at heart.

The real reason for the exclusion of Major Erasmus was that he was temporarily under a cloud, as the result of the poor display made by his force in the Malaboch campaign. Kruger, with characteristic bluntness, replied: "I spent quite enough on your son when I sent him to Holland to learn artillery business. He never learnt it properly."

There was a coolness between the house of Erasmus and the Presidency that lasted two years. Abel took his revenge by supporting the candidature of General Joubert for the Presidency.

What the Commission did in Europe we do not pretend to know, but we do know they visited most of the capitals, and, if Van der Merwe is to be believed, he was hospitably entertained by the officers of several English garrisons

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and shown things that he ought not to have seen, and probably did not see.

Three months after the return of the Commission four large cases arrived at the Artillery barracks in Pretoria via Delagoa Bay. As they required about fifty Kaffirs to off-load, it is safe to assume that the contents were not mealies, although they were deposited in a strongly constructed building in the barrack grounds, said to be intended as a Government mealie store. No mealies were ever taken there, but the forge and appliances of the Artillery armourer were. The door—a very wide one—was kept constantly locked, the officers and mechanics who entered closing it carefully and promptly on entering and leaving, and a sentry was always at hand when any person, authorised or not, approached the building. The principal windows were in the roof. Those in the walls were either painted or frosted. During the ensuing year several similar heavy cases were taken inside, and the rule forbidding persons, even members of the Artillery, approaching the building was strictly enforced. Among those who seemed to have the entrée were members of the German contingent, whose presence in Pretoria was a source of considerable speculation.

But there is neither intention nor need to treat this matter as if revealing a great and unguessed secret. It is known and admitted that arming on a colossal scale proceeded a year after the Jameson Raid, and the British Government were fully aware of it.

We say this in full knowledge, only making this reservation, that if they did not know, then they never received numerous reports furnished by Britishers in the Transvaal who were in a position to know.

It may be that the same disinclination to accept advice and information from the man on the spot which characterised the British officers during the war may have prevailed at the War Office, and that the powers that be ignored any

intelligence that did not come from their own accredited representatives. But that particulars, details, and suggestions were forwarded to the home authorities, which after events proved to be thoroughly reliable, we do know, for the sufficient reason that the advice of the writer was sought by three of these voluntary informants, and he drafted and dispatched the letters.

It seems to be the rule of the authorities to attach more weight to the person supplying information than to the matter he has to impart. The invariable question put was, "Who is he?" not "What does he know?" No doubt character goes for much when serious affairs are to be considered, but it is folly to discredit an informant because he is not a member of an exclusive club or social set.

In too many instances the valuable informer does not fulfil these conditions. The observation of, say, a mechanic, called in to assist in repairing a Long Tom, carefully concealed in a guarded shed, should be as valuable as the opinion of a British official whose knowledge of what may be going on is derived from a chat over the dinner-table with an officer of the Transvaal Artillery. The attitude assumed by too many Britishers, official and semi-official, was that of incredulity. "I have not heard anything of this; therefore, I doubt it."

Here is a true and illustrative case in point: In 1897 the Boer Government erected in or near many dorps solid stone buildings of uniform size—that is, about ten feet square. They were all placed in a position where they could be plainly seen from the local police station. What the rest of them may have contained is only a matter for conjecture, but we know as a fact that one was packed with cases of cartridges. We learned this by being present when a Scotch cart was off-loading cases after dark. One case fell from the cart and burst, revealing its contents. The official in charge, a personal friend, confided to us that the cases contained ammunition for the use of

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the newly formed volunteer corps. We communicated the circumstance to a very ardent Britisher in the district, a man who proved his loyalty by laying down his life on the battle-field. He was duly impressed, and in turn informed another authoritative Britisher, who was supposed to be keeping a sharp eye on British interests in the Transvaal. A few days later the local man referred to the subject :

"I told So and So about those magazines. He spoke to the Landdrost, and was told that you are mistaken. Those buildings are only store-houses for post office telegraph wire!" And the British sleuth-hound accepted the official explanation.

Here is another story :

There was in Pretoria jail serving a long term for burglary an Englishman who was known throughout the country as a skilled mechanic. He had deserted from the Royal Engineers at Capetown, whence he had been specially sent to assist in the fitting of the new heavy guns there in 1890. On one of our official visits to the jail we were told by this man that he had recently been sent to the barracks to make some mechanical repairs to a gun, and he described the weapon as an expert, in a spirit of pride of his work and of satisfaction at being sent for, not as one imparting a secret. The gun he described we later knew too well as a Creusot.

This fact we also communicated to a British authority.

"You say this man is a convict?" was the comment.

"Yes."

"Oh!" And he smiled pityingly.

There was some trouble about the selection of the Mauser as the official weapon. There is reason to believe that the Third Raad had intervened. They had probably got a finger in the pie that was to have been divided among the agents for a rival rifle, and finding that General Joubert had decided on the Mauser they brought their influence to bear to abrogate the contract. It is an open secret that a

dead set was made against the Mauser by several influential burghers who were in alliance with the Third Raad. We were present at a trial of four of these splendid weapons conducted by half a dozen West Rand officials. The shooting was excellent, the trajectory being marvellously low, and, so far as we were able to judge, the rifle did everything that was claimed for it.

Among the party of judges was a relative of one of the Third Raad members. He was aggressively hostile. His objections were met and satisfactorily answered by all the other members of the trial committee, but he was obdurate in the face of irresistible proof. His last and only reasonable objection was that the rifle was too heavy and the wood casing of the muzzle too thick.

Although the majority in favour of the rifle was five to one, the report sent in was against it. How he converted the others may be guessed.

Among the arms purchased by the Government were 5,000 revolvers by a German maker. What became of them we do not know. They were not served out; and all that was afterwards seen of them was one here and there in the office of an official.

In this connection it may be mentioned that when the British were sent out of the country a search was made at the border on every train, the objective being arms. Over 3,000 revolvers were confiscated from passengers. What became of them has never been explained.

An incident which may or may not be indicative of the existence of belief in impending war on the part of certain officials occurred at Krugersdorp in December, 1897. The Staats Artillerie, with their really admirable band, had paid a brief visit to the capital of the West Rand, and were fêted enthusiastically by the officials and leading burghers.

It may be that the unwonted sight of uniforms and the presence of the symbolism of war excited Young Afrikanerdom, but the fact remains that for a week or two after-

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wards a wave of aggressive anti-Englanderism passed over the district. A number of outrageous assaults on inoffensive Uitlanders were perpetrated by officials, and at least one high in authority let fall sinister hints and threats of what was to happen shortly to Britishers in the country.

During this fever period two officials called upon the present writer, who was then editing the *Transvaal Sentinel*, and was supposed by the Boers of the district to be an authority on every phase of international politics and everything else that had a British complexion.

With Boer directness the visitors came to the point :

"We have been having a discussion," said the spokesman, a middle-aged, serious-minded official, famed locally for his anti-British views. "What would happen suppose a burgher were to go to the house of the British Resident in Pretoria (Sir, then Mr., Conyngham Greene) and gave him a sjamboking? Wouldn't England be obliged to declare war against the Transvaal?"

We suggested, on the strength of some personal experience, that there were two persons concerned in a sjamboking, and that the other man generally had something to say and do, and in the end a magistrate usually had the last word.

The visitors resented the flippancy.

"You might give us a proper answer, because, in any case, it's going to happen," was the gravely emphatic reply.

We asked for time to consult authorities on international law, and advised a suspension of hostilities pending judgment.

They left unsatisfied, the spokesman remarking ominously :

"Something has got to be done to hurry things up. They're too slow at Pretoria."

We learned later that the project had been seriously discussed; the only difficulty was to ensure a competent

assailant who would not mind if he lost his position in the service as a consequence.

This point seemed to have weighed very considerably, for we never heard of the sjamboking happening.

An incident occurred about this time which showed perhaps more plainly how much the imminence of war with England occupied the Boer mind.

It happened that a large number of the telegraphists in the Transvaal were Englishmen. Though by the terms of their employment they had to be burghers, many were not. The chief of the Johannesburg Telegraph Department was an Englishman who stood very high in his profession; in fact, it was recognised by all competent to offer an opinion that the Johannesburg service was the equal of the best anywhere. There were, of course, a large number of Afrikaners in this important branch of the service, but the Government were fully alive to the fact that they, as a body, were not sufficiently capable to justify superseding the Britishers.

An influentially supported petition to the Executive was prepared on the West Rand, and signed by every Boer of influence, pointing out that the presence of so many Englishers in the telegraph service was unfair to the sons of burghers, but even more serious for the reason that in the event of war with England they would be a source of danger, as they were certain to take sides with their own countrymen. The resolution went on to say that the time had arrived when the places occupied by Englishers as chiefs of telegraph should be filled by burghers, and suggested that no time should be lost in putting their own people into those positions so that when the time came they would be qualified to take up the entire charge of their offices without the assistance of Englishers.

It may be objected that this petition was on the lines of many that were frequently sent in to the Government, mainly by Boers in the far outlying districts. That is true,

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but the authors of this petition were of the more enlightened class of burgher, many of them men of very liberal views on the racial question. But the importance and significance of the matter was contained in the reply from the Executive.

The subject, it said, has the fullest sympathy of the Government and has already occupied its attention. Action on the lines suggested might be expected very soon.

We had published and commented upon this petition in the Transvaal *Sentinel*. At the same time that the petitioners received their reply we received an intimation that the Government would prefer that the matter should not be again referred to in print.

Coincident with this, and equally significant, was the circumstance that all at once the Government manifested a distinct coolness to the many men with English names who held any sort of office, direct or indirect, from the Government. At this period there were to our knowledge about a dozen Englishmen about to be appointed to places of profit or influence under the Government—ranging from district auctioneers to foremen printers, electricians, and other skilled workers. Within a month every appointment in embryo was hung up on some pretence, usually so transparent that the motive was obvious. In no case was an Englishman appointed afterwards. It may have been only a coincidence, but at the same time a number of exposures of malfeasance and corruption in the Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Boksburg police and detective forces came to light as the result of an investigation conducted secretly and quickly. With only two exceptions the eighteen officers suspended or discharged bore British names.

Up to this time the art of signalling as practised in most European armies was unknown to the Boers. Instruction in flag signalling was given by a German to the

to the bandsmen of the State Artillery, with instructions to young Englishman to form a signalling corps of young burghers in connection with the recently formed volunteer corps on the West Rand. The offer was accepted by General Ben Viljoen, who was in command, and the lessons began. Within a month the instructor was told that the Government had decided that the subject was not essential. He was thanked for his services, and the class broken up. A little later the lessons were resumed in the privacy of the jail yard, the instructor being a German.

Another small but noteworthy incident adding to the straws indicating the direction of the wind was this: A number of copies of the British army red book was obtained from England, and the British bugle calls there given copied out by a hectograph process and given to the bandsmen of the State Artillery, with instructions to practise them. Bugles, unknown to the Boer before, were also provided, but for some reason withdrawn a week or so later.

These may be trifling incidents, but that they were portents that could only be read one way history has proved satisfactorily.

Now and then an official or burgher who spoke with the authority of intimate acquaintance with inner Pretoria would allow himself to be questioned on these signs of the times. In every case the explanation was a paraphrase of a remark attributed to the President: "After the treacherous Jameson Raid are we not justified in taking precautions so that we shall not be surprised again?"

The answer was inevitable. Common sense prompted it. "Certainly, you are justified in arming for defence."

In January, 1898, occurred another pregnant event: A general overhauling of the affairs of magazine masters throughout the Transvaal took place. These functionaries were in charge of the ammunition and arms supplied to burghers by the Government at cheap rates. None but a

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burgher could purchase, but this rule had been allowed to fall into desuetude. A new and emphatic rule was promulgated, forbidding the magazine master to supply any but burghers. In several cases burghers bearing British names found some difficulty in getting a fresh supply of ammunition, and in other instances application for a new rifle was either refused outright or evaded on the ground of shortness of supply.

In fine, from January, 1898, the attitude of official and leading Boers towards Britishers underwent a striking change. It seemed as if the word had been passed round that friendly relations were to cease and the British Uitlander be boycotted and frozen out.

To a certain extent this spirit was manifested directly after the Jameson Raid, but it was evanescent, and externally all feeling, at least in the neighbourhood of the Witwatersrand, had cooled down to pre-Raid temperature within a year. The point at which antagonism reasserted itself was clearly marked, and it required no very profound acquaintance with Boer thought and character to read the signs aright. Many Britishers did, and when they interpreted them for the benefit of their fellows in the high places, they were reproached as alarmists and shared the fate of most prophets.

It may be that the home authorities were fully informed of the trend of affairs, but the events that followed did not suggest it. Distrust of the man on the spot has always been a British official characteristic, and probably will be till the end.

Perhaps the most conclusive evidence of preparation is supplied by the fact that at this period there was a noticeable passing and repassing of prominent burghers and officials between the Transvaal and the sister Free State and Cape Colony. Never before were so many Government men visiting their relatives and friends outside the Republic at one time. During the middle of 1898 it was a

novelty to find the heads of many Government departments in their offices. It was also remarked that an unusually large number of them were said to be recuperating at the warm baths in Northern Transvaal; yet returned visitors from that blest retreat did not complain of finding the very limited accommodation taxed. Natal, too, never popular with Transvaalers, suddenly became a place of interest to Government men. Two years later, when resident in that colony, we came upon traces of the visits of numerous Pretorians of our acquaintance. Most of them had been looking up long-parted-from friends and relatives among the Dutch element of the colony.

One party, consisting of General Ben Viljoen and three military experts, made Maritzburg their headquarters, and devoted much time to Fort Napier and its garrison. One member of the party inquired of a local bookseller for a copy of the British Army List, and paid a six months' subscription for it, the volumes to be sent to an address in Pretoria. In the beginning of 1899 a temporary detective office near the President's residence in Pretoria was fitted up for some purpose, which was not apparently fulfilled. Among the rubbish piled on the floor for a week or more was about a hundred volumes of the British Army List, English Blue Books, and a mass of official publications relating to the two services. They all dated from the early part of 1898.

A Sherlock Holmes might construct a pretty theory out of this incident.

There stayed one night at a West Rand hotel a Young Afrikaner, who was visiting friends in the district. He left in the morning, giving no indication as to his plans, and, not returning in three or four days, the hotel proprietor examined his portmanteau with the object of getting a clue as to his guest. Among a scanty supply of linen was a strange-looking object, which the mining men in the bar pronounced to be a new sort of surveying instru-

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ment, until a more up-to-date engineer examined it and recognised it as the range-finder in use in the British army. A few days later a friend of the departed guest arrived, paid the bill and removed the baggage. The hotel-keeper's curiosity having been aroused, he directed attention to the instrument and inquired its use.

"He told me its name," answered the unsophisticated Boer; "but I forget what he called it. He tried it on my farm to see how far the Magaliesberg mountains were away, but he couldn't make it work properly. He is going to tell Paul Kruger not to buy any more, as they are no good."

It is probable that the great question, "Which side sought the war?" will to the end supply a subject for partisan discussion. It must be admitted by impartial judges that the attitude assumed by the Boer Government after the Raid was reasonably compatible with the generally advanced explanation of preparation for defence in the event of another attack.

"How can I believe their assurances after Jameson's Raid?" was a stereotyped reply made by Kruger to all representations that the British Government was friendly disposed to the Transvaal, and it was re-echoed in more emphatic form by representative Boer leaders.

One point must be conceded to the advocates of the intent theory. There was a large and influential war party, not only in the country, but in the Councils of the State. They were mainly the younger men, who knew nothing of the real side of war, and drew their inspiration from the stories of their mothers and grandmothers and the trumpety triumphs of the two Kaffir campaigns in which they had taken part. It was the strange personal magnetism that Paul Kruger exercised over his people that silenced the opposition of men like Joubert. Whence he obtained the frenzied folly that induced belief in the impregnability of the Transvaal is no secret. For the first and only time

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in his life he surrendered his will and judgment to the control of a younger man—Dr. Leyds.

The greatest puzzle of all is, did the astute, cultured, European-trained Hollander honestly believe that a petty State could hold out against Great Britain's might, or did he believe in the assurances he gave his employers, that all was well since the Kaiser was their friend?

CHAPTER XV

I.D.B.

(ILLICIT DIAMOND BUYING)

Scarcity of Literary Records of I.D.B.—Diamond Stealing in the Pre-Amalgamation Days—Robbery by Partners—Story of a Faithless Wife—Kaffirs as Thieves—Colonial Hostility to the I.D.B. Laws—The 1882 Diamond Law—The Case for the Opposition—Illicit Diamond Dealing in Kimberley—An I.D.B.'s Luck—Weakness of the Diamond Detective System—The Diamond Law as a Weapon for Revenge—A Clean Detective Force—Public Sympathy with Criminals—Runners and their Methods—Natal Refuses to Co-operate in Suppressing I.D.B.—An Absconding Runner—Some I.D.B. Stories—Fifty Arrests of a Practical Joker—I.D.B. Chiefs and their Methods

THERE are few phases of crime that have not something approaching a literature of their own, especially when the offence calls for any degree of skill and intelligence in carrying it to a successful issue.

Compared with the magnitude of the particular crime here purposed to be dealt with, its records, both official, literary and journalistic, are surprisingly meagre.

Only one serious attempt has been made to present the romance of the South African diamond fields in more than ephemeral form. James Couper, who combined literary tastes with successful pugilism, wrote a book which, under the title of "Mixed Humanity," gave the best, in fact the only large and full, description of life in Kimberley in its early days.

Unfortunately, being cast in the form of an autobiographical novel, the necessity for introducing plot, passion and the other stock interests of the regulation romance detracted from the value of the work as a picture of a set of conditions having no parallel in any other land.

Now and again some popular magazine or newspaper has published a few stories based on the illicit diamond trade, but in these also accuracy has been sacrificed to sensation.

The explanation of this lack of literary record is simple. The men who formed the bulk of the population of the diamond fields were not of the type given to expressing themselves in print, while the very few qualified by experience were either incompetent to tell their stories or had their pens and tongues withheld by official or diplomatic restraint.

From the time of the first diamond digging in Griqualand West until the institution of the compound system, the stealing of diamonds by employees, white and black, was a standing menace to the prosperity and very existence of the diamond industry. The conditions were such as to render theft so easy that the marvel is that there was not more of it. Not only was the crime easy, but the reward sufficiently great to tempt anyone whose integrity was not of the cast-iron mould.

Up till quite recently the method of extracting the diamond from its hiding-place was of the most primitive description. A hole was dug in the ground, varying in size from a few square yards to many square acres. The petrified soil known as blue clay was laid out in the open to weather, then pulverised with water in primitive receptacles, and the disintegrated soil, pebbles and earthy detritus were gone over by hand in quest of the gems.

These processes took time, were conducted in the open, and by numbers of employees, white and black. The detection and secretion of a valuable stone need be only the work of a second; and in the absence of any such precautions as those later adopted, it is safe to say that the odds were always on the thief, and the prospect of escaping detection much greater than the chances of finding an immediate purchaser for the stolen goods.

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When it is remembered that at one time hundreds of distinct and rival claims were being worked, ranging from one requiring only the services of three or four Kaffirs and the white owner to the vast Du Toitspan or Central Kimberley mines, employing thousands, it is easy to believe that of the total number of diamonds obtained, only about half found their way into the hands of their legitimate owners.

It is, of course, impossible to obtain reliable figures of the extent of the robberies, but it should be sufficient to know that a year or two before the great amalgamation of all the mines it had become a serious question whether legitimate diamond digging was worth the candle. The number of stolen stones put upon the European market was so large that in self-defence reputable dealers had to limit the output in order to keep up prices.

We have it on the authority of one of the very few persons who will admit having been connected with the illicit diamond business that he once held possession of over a thousand pounds' worth of stones for several months because he could not get a better offer than £50. He sold them at the end of that period for £150, and considered he had done well. The market in stolen stones was glutted at that period, and the buyers were masters of the situation. It was not merely a case of "Take my offer or leave it," but "Take it or—the consequences."

The only means of checking the wholesale stealing was by the common law. This became well-nigh inoperative, for the sufficient reason that it was rarely that a thief was caught with the evidence of his guilt upon him. There was no right of search, no power of arrest on suspicion or without a warrant. The unfortunate claim owner was helpless. He knew that the Kaffirs working for him were finding as many stones as he, and disposing of them to the low-class aliens of every nationality who swarmed in Kimberley and lived in opulence without any apparent means

of support; but he could do nothing except suspect everybody and watch unceasingly. Now and then a claim-owner, exasperated beyond endurance, would discard the red-tape of legal procedure, take the law into his own hands and arrest, search and half-kill some wretched Kaffir rightly or wrongly suspected of stealing stones.

There is a horrible story in this connection that was well known to old Kimberleyites. A Vaal River digger had suffered considerably through the pilfering of his Kaffirs. He discovered that a native who acted as tout and runner for a white man was the provoking cause, and, waiting his opportunity, caught him in the act of purchasing for a few shillings a valuable stone from one of his own boys. He administered a good thrashing to both, then dragged the chief offender into the veld, pushed him into an ant-bear hole—a big burrow—and filled in the earth, leaving the head of the boy protruding. He went away, intending to return next morning and release the prisoner. He delayed till the sun was well up. All he found was a grinning skull. The vultures had picked off every item of flesh and skin. Nothing happened to the digger as a consequence of his act. Those were primitive times.

No doubt the bulk of the robberies were perpetrated by the Kaffir employees, for they practically always had first chance, being the actual diggers, while their extra sharp sight enabled them to detect a stone in the disintegrating soil on the floors quicker than the white man. But whites were not exempt from just cause for blame or suspicion. Many a man has robbed his partner, and even his best friend, in his mad haste to be rich, concealing the stones he has found at the wash-up and sorting, or acquired from the Kaffirs, unknown to his partner.

One of the first, if not the first, big robbery of stones was of this character. A young Englishman of good family arrived on the fields, and having about a couple of hundred pounds but no experience, joined a Scotsman

who was working a claim that seemed promising. They did little for a month or so beyond just paying expenses; but presently the average finds rose very considerably, then dropped to below the previous worst.

At the end of about four months the Englishman announced that he was sick of the business and would retire, leaving it to the generosity of his partner to return his partnership money if luck turned. The Englishman celebrated his departure by standing drinks with suspicious liberality to a crowd at a canteen. Knowing—or, rather, believing—that the young man was so short of money that the raising of the homeward fare had been a matter of difficulty, the partner began to think and ask a few questions. He noticed that a German Jew, who was suspected of being an illicit buyer, was on very friendly terms with the Englishman, and drew certain conclusions, on which he resolved to act. He joined the drinking party, encouraged his departing partner to linger over final glasses, and carried him home very drunk. He took the opportunity of making a domiciliary search, and was rewarded by finding over £4,000 worth of stones concealed in various parts of the baggage, besides conclusive evidence that the faithless partner had sent through the post to Cape Town parcels whose contents could be well guessed.

The young man left for Cape Town next day, bearing the signs of a broken heart and head. That he carried little away with him was inferred from the fact that for a couple of years after leaving the diamond fields he was working as clerk in a small store.

The temptation offered by the unnoticed finding of a valuable stone proved in numerous cases too great for the maintenance of even the ties and obligations of the family. The domestic peace of more than one home in young Kimberley was wrecked by the inability of a wife or husband, son or daughter, to resist the opportunity of retaining

unsplit the proceeds of an extra fine stone that turned up in the wash in which the family took part in order to eliminate the necessity for outside help.

A dramatist in quest of novel material for a domestic drama, and even tragedy, would find all he sought if he could but get some of the old stagers to stimulate their memories and abandon that reticence on the subject of I.D.B. which is a peculiar but marked characteristic of the old Kimberleyite.

There are two or three very dramatic and pathetic stories told of this phase of human weakness. One is of a young English Colonial who, after several years of that persistent ill-luck which sometimes dogs those more deserving of better things, brought his young wife to Kimberley and worked a claim. The wife assisted in the washing and sorting, as did the members of the families of most diggers, and in other ways proved a helpmeet to her husband of more than usual industry. She had undergone privations with him that were the greater because she was the daughter of a well-to-do Colonial, and had enjoyed in girlhood all the advantages that ample means could give even in those comparatively primitive days. Her marriage had been a matter of impulse rather than genuine affection, but the infatuation of the husband blinded him to certain little defects in the character of his wife, and enabled him to accept her assurance that she was learning to love him more every day.

The claim proved a good one. It maintained its average with gratifying persistency, and but for the low price of diamonds, brought about by the competition of too many diggers and the thefts, the owner would have been well on the high road leading to independence.

One day an acute attack of an indeterminate form of fever laid him up. The wife was attentive, as a good wife should be, and won the admiration and expressed approval of the doctor, who described her as the finest nurse in camp.

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In the course of a few days the patient made a partial recovery. The doctor took advantage of it to send him away from the dust of Kimberley to a farmhouse about six hours' trek on the Orange Free State side. The wife accompanied her husband on the journey; and having seen him comfortably bestowed in the care of the farmer's wife and daughter, returned to Kimberley to superintend a wash-up of more than usual promise and importance. She knew the business so thoroughly that the temporary retirement of the husband proved only a slight inconvenience. Knowing this, he remained in blissful content on the farm, awaiting the return of his partner three or four days hence with the proceeds of the wash-up.

He waited a week; then sent messengers to know the cause of the silence and non-appearance.

He learned that two days before his wife had left in a Cape cart, ostensibly to rejoin her husband. The anxiety and suspense brought about a serious relapse. It was more than a fortnight before he could resume his inquiries.

Friends broke the truth to him as gently as they knew how.

The young fellow who occupied an adjoining claim, and had occasionally partaken of the hospitality of the couple, was, unknown to the husband, the first lover of the woman—a ne'er-do-well, who had been warned off by the girl's father, and to checkmate whom the old gentleman had assisted and hurried on the marriage that followed.

It was evident that the pair had gone off together, and were out of reach of interception or punishment. Then it was that the husband discovered that his accumulated store of stones had been taken by his treacherous wife.

He returned to the deserted home, took a dose of some agonisingly corrosive poison in a stiff glass of brandy, and joined the Legion of the Betrayed and Lost.

Very early in the chapter Cecil Rhodes realised that the

only practical way of stopping the wholesale thefts of diamonds was by segregating the Kaffir employees. So long as they were free to wander at will, the leakage would and must continue. No system of search had so far proved absolutely effective. Even under the latter-day conditions, Kaffirs contrived to conceal stones found on the floor, pass through the search on leaving work, and carry the stone into the compound, where it would be concealed until it was smuggled out by some of the privileged whites who had the entry to the compound.

The natives developed an amazing adroitness in concealing stones. Some of the true stories are almost unbelievable. As in the case of conjuring tricks, the simplest were often the most successful, their apparent simplicity throwing the watcher off his guard. The following is a case in point :

A native at the Kimberley mine found a fine stone. He was wearing a battered slouch hat of the Alpine type, with a very pronounced cleft formed by the two sides of the crown. With a piece of fat, probably kept in reserve for such an opportunity, he stuck the stone to the outside of the crown, in that part of the cleft where the two sides would touch when the hat was lifted off by the centre. The boy submitted himself to the usual search, first throwing his hat on to the ground, where it lay with the inside exposed. The searcher gave it a perfunctory glance and proceeded with the exploration of the parts of the native's body always examined most closely. The ordeal was successfully passed. The boy replaced his hat and carried to his quarters a stone that eventually changed hands for £900. The Kaffir received £15.

This same boy is said to have passed through, in the course of three years, before and during the compound system, over £10,000 worth of stones. He was never caught, but the diamonds were the cause of his tragic end. He left the mines, probably feeling that his marvellous

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luck could not always keep in, and became a runner—that is, one of the natives employed to carry stolen stones from Kimberley into Freetown, a town founded by I.D.B.'s just over the Free State border, as a sanctuary and market-place. He was going over in the capacity of decoy, in company with another native. His business was to run, if challenged by the police, in order to give his companion, who carried the stones, a chance to get through while the pursuers were devoting attention to the runner. Occasion arose for acting up to his instructions. The pair were stopped by the mounted patrol, and the decoy started off towards the border, while the other slipped away in another direction. A mounted trooper followed and rode him down, horse and rider coming a cropper over the fugitive, whose ribs and arms were broken. He died before he could be carried to shelter. His employer is said to have found over three hundred sovereigns in the boy's sleeping quarters in a stable, his savings during four years' service on the diamond fields.

The Kaffir who carried the parcel of stones on this occasion got through to Freetown in the darkness, although the police twice nearly rode over him as he lay hiding in the grass.

The institution of the compound system by Mr. Rhodes aroused the angry hostility of the very large number of persons who battered on the unfortunate Kaffir. They complained, not without cause, that if the native were not allowed outside the compound during his term of service, but purchased his necessities from the stores run by the mining company, their vocation as caterers for the Kaffir would be gone. The opposition was violent. Heartrending stories were told of once-prosperous men ruined and brought to actual destitution by the compounding of the natives. Members in Parliament were induced to voice the grievances of the injured storekeepers, and an Act was proposed on the lines of the English Truck Act, forbidding

the payment of the wages of natives in goods. As this system did not prevail in the De Beers mine, the proposed law could not affect that property. The discussion on the Bill gave Mr. Rhodes an opportunity to put in a defence of the compound system which was so unanswerably telling that to this day no one with knowledge of the facts has attempted to reopen the subject. It was in this speech that Mr. Rhodes made the memorable remark, "I may tell the House that so great is the effect of the compound system on diamond thefts, that if I could retain my compounds I would not mind letting go the special legislation to prevent diamond thefts, to which exception has sometimes been taken."

The special legislation referred to by Mr. Rhodes were the Draconian laws for the suppression of diamond thefts.

The great Act is that of 1882, entitled "An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Laws for the Regulation of the Trade in Diamonds, and to Provide for the Punishment of Certain Offences."

Clause 2 provides that it shall not be lawful for any person, except as in this Act excepted, to have in his possession any rough or uncut diamonds, and any such person who shall be found in the possession of any rough or uncut diamond, and shall be unable to account satisfactorily for or prove his right to the possession of such rough or uncut diamond, or to produce his proper permit for the same in accordance with the provisions of this Act, shall, on conviction, be liable to a penalty of £1,000, or fifteen years' imprisonment, or both.

Clause 3 provides that to any person who shall have been sentenced under the provisions of this Act to any greater term than five years, it shall be lawful for the Governor to remit any portion of such term in excess of five years on condition of such person leaving and not returning to any part of Griqualand West or to any district in which this Act shall be in force, and if such person

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return within the time, he shall be liable to re-arrest and imprisonment for a term equal to the portion of the sentence unexpired at the time of his release from custody.

Clause 4 provides that it shall be unlawful to sell, offer, or expose for sale, barter, pledge, or in any way, either as principal or agent, dispose of or deliver any rough or uncut diamond unless it shall be actually the property or lawful possession of such banker or diamond dealer.

The onus of proof of lawful possession shall always rest upon the accused.

Any person finding a diamond must register it within fourteen days, and get a permit for dealing with that diamond.

No licensed dealer may buy from a person incompetent lawfully to sell.

No dealings are permitted between sunset and sunrise or on Sunday, under a penalty of £1,000 or twelve months' imprisonment and forfeiture of all licences.

No dealer may do business outside his place of business.

Clause 12 provides that it shall be lawful for the chief of police in any district, or the chief of the diamond detectives, whenever he shall have good cause to believe that any parcel or package is being dispatched through the post-office by any person, and which parcel contains rough or uncut diamonds which have not been entered according to the provision of this Act, to stop, or cause to be stopped, such parcel, and the person dispatching it will receive notice to call and be present at the opening of such parcel.

Clause 13 provides for the finding of diamonds outside a claim. Any person finding a diamond elsewhere than on a claim, must deposit the same with the resident magistrate, who shall advertise it in a local newspaper. If the owner does not come forward within twenty-one days, the diamond is to be sold and the proceeds paid into the State

Treasury. Penalty for non-compliance, a fine of £500 and five years' imprisonment.

Clause 14 gives practically unlimited power to the police to enter any premises, to arrest any person, seize any goods or things suspected of being in any way connected with an infraction of the law. It is true that the Act provides for arrest by warrant, but that formality could be dispensed with under special and numerous circumstances which rendered the possession of a warrant quite superfluous.

The fees for the various kinds of permits needed by persons dealing in diamonds are reasonable, ranging from £30 per annum, or £10 quarterly, for a dealer, to one shilling for a licence to wash debris.

Every applicant for a dealer's licence has to provide two reputable and responsible sureties, and full power is given the magistrate to exercise his discretion in deciding whether the applicant is a suitable person to be granted a permit.

Any misrepresentation made for the purpose of procuring a licence is punishable by a fine of £500 and five years' imprisonment.

The administration of the laws against diamond stealing was rendered extra hard by the fact that a very large proportion of the population, not only of Kimberley, but of Cape Colony and the Orange Free State, regarded them as unduly severe and an infringement on popular rights.

As is the case with smuggling in almost every civilised country, where offences against the people are held to be merely venial, so illicit diamond dealing was looked upon as no crime, and the public sympathy was largely with the offender.

If there was no public jubilation on the rare occasions when the accused in an I.D.B. case was acquitted, it was not because real pleasure was not felt, but for the cautionary reason that a person showing satisfaction was

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likely to be marked as an actual as well as passive accessory.

The opposition of the Colonial *qua* Colonial was summed up in a letter by a one-time prominent Cape politician published in a Cape paper. He objected to so much Government aid and encouragement being given to the De Beers Company, for the following main reasons:—

“ The diamond industry as now conducted is of little benefit to the Colony. Before the amalgamation of the different small holdings brought about by Mr. Rhodes, a large white population was employed, but the centralisation of the mines under one control, and that control a huge monopoly, has seriously reduced the number of persons necessary to work them.”

He gives certain figures (which we may add have been authoritatively traversed in part) showing that the population of Kimberley had decreased, and that hundreds of stores and residences had been allowed to fall into neglect and decay.

“ The argument used to conciliate the Boers, to the effect that the existence of a town like Kimberley provides a market for their produce, is not half so effective as it sounds. But for the discovery of diamonds many of the people now in Kimberley would be in other parts of the Colony, whence they have been attracted by the diamonds, and it matters little where a man lives if he is a consumer of the things the Boer produces. It may be true that a certain number of new-comers find a home in Kimberley, but the good and useful among them are set off by the large number of undesirables. Never before in the history of South Africa was there so much crime and so many criminals as the diamond mines have attracted.

“ The industry is absolutely non-productive so far as Cape Colony is concerned, since not a pennyworth of its products remain in the country. They are sent to England, and the

Colony makes nothing out of them beyond the paltry sum paid for postage of the stones.

" The chiefs of the industry are non-resident in the Colony ; most of them have never seen it, and their profits are spent in European capitals.

" Those who are compelled by duties to remain in the Colony do so only on compulsion, and the ambition of their lives is to get away from it as quickly as possible. If they build residences they are as cheap and temporary as possible, so as to avoid the spending of money in the country.

" The employment of the native on the mines has ruined him as a useful servant for the farmers or townsmen. Knowing that he can get big wages at Kimberley, he refuses any other kind of work for months, even years, till necessity drives ; then he goes to the mines and earns in a couple of years more than he could earn in ten in the old way. He has also picked up many vices to which he was before a stranger.

" It is opposed to all precedent that a Government should give its support to a private enterprise as the Cape Government does to the De Beers Company. The directors have only to ask to receive, whether it be cheap convict native labour, or a new restrictive law and machinery for doing what any other private company would have to do for itself at its own expense.

" The system of police espionage authorised and supported by a special Act of Parliament has no equal in any country in the world save Russia, and perhaps Turkey. It is not too much to say that under existing conditions the liberty of any man is at the mercy of any man or woman having a spite against him, and five pounds with which to purchase a raw diamond to drop into his coat pocket, and a sheet of writing paper on which to write an anonymous information and denunciation to the police.

" What may happen to that man when once he has passed through the doors of the Secret Police Bureau any man may guess but no man prove, for these are only biased witnesses, who could, if they dared, speak the truth and reveal stories

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that would make all conscientiously disposed Britons cease to denounce the methods of the Russian Secret Police and the *sbirri* of the Austrian occupation of Rome, whose atrocities stirred Garibaldi to patriotism and heroism.

"To-day every man in Kimberley regards the other man as a possible spy or trap, or worse, and it is dangerous to inquire after a friend one has not seen for a day or two lest he may be under arrest on suspicion, which is the same as certainty, and you put under observation because you are sufficiently interested in him to ask about him. Your inquiry will be interpreted into an artful assumption of an innocence that is not genuine.

"The Diamond Laws have set father against son, husband against wife; they have turned us into a community of spies and informers, of hypocrites and backbiters, for those of us who save money by judicious and legitimate thrift dare not avow the fact lest we be suspected of having acquired our poor competency by illegitimate means, while there are always plenty ready to affirm that the new suit of clothes we last put on was part of the proceeds of an I.D.B. deal.

"As to the infamous system of 'trapping,' no words can be too harsh in condemning it. It makes more crime than it detects; it embitters the viciously disposed and makes the judicious grieve. . . . Well may the Colonial Treasurer say the diamond mines of Kimberley have been the curse of Cape Colony."

This somewhat extravagant diatribe is interesting, as it gives an idea of the intensity and nature of the feeling against the industry held by some people on the spot.

The politico-economic aspect of the question and the utility of the diamond industry to the Colony may be left to those who have been discussing it for many years past. One aspect of the case, the trapping, may be considered.

We have remarked in our chapter on the illicit liquor business on the Rand that the method of obtaining convic-

tions by trapping—that is, sending a spy to purchase liquor off a person suspected of supplying it—was always unpopular, and only justified on the ground of expediency. The objection was that a person not heretofore a law-breaker might be tempted by the trap to become one.

So far as that argument applies to a Rand liquor-seller, we need not labour the point in asserting that a person prepared to sell liquor to natives would not be deterred by the knowledge that traps were employed, while one who was in fear of breaking the law, or who had no penchant for a particularly dirty phase of money-getting, would not be tempted by a strange and casual applicant.

In Kimberley it is an acknowledged fact that the employment of traps, or persons sent to tempt others to purchase stones illicitly, was more far-reaching. The object was less to secure a conviction than to establish a reign of terror among illicit—to impress them with the fact that they could never be certain that the person they were dealing with might not prove to be a police spy. There is little doubt that in the main the trapping system had this effect. It is equally certain that few men not disposed to engage in I.D.B. ever yielded to the persuasions of a stranger, white or black, who offered a stone for sale.

In the early days the trap was nearly always a native. The newest new-comer would be more likely to believe the story of the Kaffir, that he was employed on a claim and had found the stone, than that a white man should be so unfamiliar with the business that he would offer a stone to a stranger. The compound system, only possible under amalgamation, saved the diamond industry by making theft by Kaffirs impossible, or at least unprofitable, because of absence of means of turning their finds to profitable account. Under the old system, the native was free to wander where he pleased after working hours. He was under no control, unless being shadowed by a diamond

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detective—a very improbable contingency—and having once got his stolen stone off the mine and placed it in safe hiding, he had ample opportunity for finding a purchaser, if not already under a working arrangement with some I.D.B.

The most prolific source of I.D.B. was the debris-washing. This debris, it should be explained, was the soil from a diamond claim or mine that had already been explored and was thrown aside. Persons not able to secure a claim of their own would obtain leave, granted on payment of a small licence, to re-wash the debris, and a living could generally be made by the industry. But for every stone acquired legitimately, probably ten had been bought from Kaffirs who had stolen them from their employers' ground. The debris-washer was a licensed dealer. He had only to declare and register the stone as having been found by himself or his assistants, and the provisions of the law were complied with.

The abolition of the debris-washer was one of the aims of Mr. Rhodes, which was only attainable when all the mines were under one control. Later, when that consummation had been achieved, the Colossus earned a temporary, but acute, unpopularity for refusing to assist in alleviating the distress in Kimberley by granting licences for debris-washing. Had he yielded, the chances are that, despite the rigorous compound system, a large number of diamonds would have leaked through this agency.

It was with the passing of the I.D.B. Act of 1882 that the romance and sensationalism of diamond stealing and smuggling began. Up till then there was practically no risk in the business. To quote a character in Couper's "Mixed Humanity," "Believe me, everybody in Kimberley is up to the eyes in the business, from the highest to the lowest."

A sweeping assertion of this kind must naturally be

taken with certain reservations; but it is not asking us to believe a miracle when we are told that the hundreds of men—and women—who left the fields after a year or two with a competency, and even wealth, acquired it by means other than the slow grind of legitimate industry or commerce. Great as were the profits made in the early days in practically every branch of business, there was a limit, and it requires no intimate acquaintance with the financial aspect to realise that in order to embark in any business carrying a large turnover capital is needed. At that period a man with a thousand pounds in cash or realisable securities could no more conceal his opulence than the wearer of a clean shirt and well-cut clothes could escape notice among a gang of diggers. The place was too small and individuals too much in the public eye to be able to carry on huge profit-making legitimate businesses in secrecy. Therefore, when we see a man arriving in Kimberley with only sufficient ready cash to maintain him at a cheap boarding-house until he procures employment, and “clearing out for home” within a couple of years or so, and saying farewell for ever to toil and impecuniosity, the inference is fairly obvious.

The impossibility of proving that any unconvicted person has been associated with I.D.B. has, or should have, the effect of making the discreet person careful in imputing the crime; and, as a rule, the older South Africans do not discuss the matter. In certain circles the subject is strictly taboo just as, we believe, is the origin and record of the older Australian families. Botany Bay and the transportation system are left to new-comers and romance writers. Early Kimberley is tacitly consigned to oblivion. That is why thrilling stories, once told in camp and dorp, are becoming forgotten, or are rehearsed in a form as unlike the original as yesterday's joint in the hands of a skilful cook.

A rigorous search by the authors for authentic records

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of the first trials for I.D.B. at Kimberley has produced very meagre results. It would seem that even the reporters desired to gloss over the reproach of Kimberley. Cases pregnant with dramatic incident were dismissed in a bald paragraph. Tragic stories that contain more genuine thrills than hundreds of sensational plays or novels are recounted in the brief matter-of-fact language of a paragraphic summary writer. Here is one, a fair sample from a Kimberley paper, probably the *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, but the cutting, pasted in a scrap-book, affords no reliable clue to the origin :

A white man was trapped in the usual way on Wednesday evening in a bar on the Pneil Road. On the way to the station the prisoner bolted, but was stopped by falling over a heap of rubbish. When the detectives came up with the floored runaway they found that he was dead, his neck having been dislocated by the fall.

The amplified version of that scant paragraph is a story of coincidences so remarkable and dramatic that, unless the facts had been vouched for by several independent witnesses, we should hesitate about printing it.

The "white man" was the heir to one of the old aristocratic families of the Midland counties. A bit "wild" as a spoiled boy, he had been expelled from a public school, "sent down" from the 'Varsity, and was expiating his sins in exile and obstinate alienation from his family. He had married the sort of woman that it is impossible to receive into an average "respectable" circle, and had committed most of those crimes which Society regards as unpardonable. He had been for some time an associate of the lowest type of men in Kimberley, and had taken to I.D.B. as the natural sequence. Having no money of his own wherewith to purchase stolen stones, he had to act as agent and jackal to those who had, and at the

time of his death was one of the tools of a more than usually disreputable I.D.B. Like most of his class, he had never been able to rise superior to the environment into which ill-luck—or, rather, his own folly—had forced him. Try as he would, he could not get hold of sufficient ready cash to enable him to get away from Kimberley and start afresh. His earnings as jackal and occasional "runner" were just enough for existence, and he had determined to make one supreme effort to extricate himself from the morass that was slowly but surely engulfing him.

That inexorable Fate which brings about the most improbable conditions when hastening the end of its victims, arranged that on the same day two "means to do ill deeds" should present themselves coincidentally. In the morning he was sent to the bank by his employer to cash a cheque for £100, a small part of which he was to receive for the purchase of a stone that a Kaffir had arranged to produce that night. It was many a day since he had handled so much money, and he lingered and loitered on the way back to his employer's residence, in order that he might luxuriate, as he told an acquaintance at the time, in the unusual delight of handling so many sovereigns. Fate ordained that his employer should get very drunk that day, and when the runner returned, he found his boss fast asleep in his chair and deaf to calls. The young man strolled into a canteen to kill time, had several poisonous whiskies, and, finding that a faro party was engaged in a private room behind the bar, entered. Within a few minutes he was staking the money of his employer, and, in direct opposition to all precedent, as provided by the moral story-books, won largely. Although under the influence of drink, he was sensible enough to listen to the counsel of an acquaintance, and abandon play when his £100 had become well over £400. He confided to the man whose advice he had taken that he intended to keep

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for himself the diamond he had an engagement to purchase that night, to return the £100 of his employer, saying the Kaffir had failed to keep the appointment. Then, with his ready cash and the stone, worth probably £200, get out of South Africa immediately. He gave his adviser £10 by way of an acknowledgment of his kindly services, and proceeded to the rendezvous.

The Kaffir seems to have kept his engagement and handed over the stone, though no one saw the meeting. The young man was returning to his lodgings when a police trap-boy accosted him, showed a stone, named a reasonable price and received it.

The concealed detectives rushed out and arrested their man while he was in the act of putting the stone into a receptacle specially arranged on his brace buckles. The end has been told. When the body was searched, the other stone was found lodged in the gullet. He had either tried to swallow it and failed, or had it in his mouth when he bolted, and the shock of the fall forced it partly down his throat.

When the first stone was sold in due course for the benefit of the State, it fetched £300.

And now for the last scene in this over-true tale. It was some months before the fate of the young man came to the ears of his family in England. The father, a healthy, vigorous fox-hunting country squire, was returning from a meet when the news was broken to him. He fell from his horse in an apoplectic fit and never spoke again. One version of the story says the actual cause of death was broken neck, but this is probably an embellishment.

When the diamond detective force was formed in Kimberley to carry out the new I.D.B. Act, the chiefs had the advantage of knowing personally probably every man known to be engaged in illicit dealing, besides a crowd of suspects. This assisted matters considerably; but it cut

two ways. The I.D.B.'s also knew the detectives, and an elaborate system of counter-shadowing was instituted by some of the more wealthy law-breakers. For a time new men, strangers to the town and district, were enrolled as detectives, but their strangeness served as a clue to their identity, so the chiefs fell back upon the safer but more complex system of employing unattached agents as informers.

They embraced every class in the population, from heads of departments in the mines to barmaids and bar-men, and the domestic Kaffir kitchen boy. Probably a more comprehensive system of espionage and docketing of personal records did not exist even in spy-ridden Russia. It would have been possible for the Diamond Detective Department to have given the history of every resident in Kimberley from the day of his arrival within the spy zone. No person was too insignificant for noting, for no one, not even the person himself, could say when or whether he would be engaged in the great conspiracy to defraud the mining companies of their dues. Employers kept an eye on their employees, their habits, customs, companions—particularly the latter. If a young clerk were noticed to be indulging in any form of indulgence entailing an expenditure beyond his known or apparent means, the fact was conveyed to the secret police, and he would be watched. The wife of a mine employee could not appear in an extra fine costume without a note being taken and inquiries instituted as to the probable source of the outlay. To be seen in the company of a known or suspected I.D.B. meant being placed on the list of the specially shadowed, and more than one perfectly innocent subject of police attention has had his nerves well-nigh shattered by the haunting fear of arrest. The imaginary detective sometimes took the place of the phantom snake or pink rat in the fevered brain of the dipsomaniac; and hotel-keepers of the old days have many stories of lodgers

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and customers who have startled the place by seeking refuge or fleeing when no man pursueth. One of the writers has a vivid recollection of sharing a room in a way-side hotel with a dignified Colonial of mature years, whose haunting took the form of Detective Izdibsky, of the Kimberley Diamond Detective Department. Of course, he was a victim of alcohol; but there was no good reason for assuming, apart from this idiosyncrasy, that the old gentleman had ever been engaged in the illicit business. He used to visit Kimberley three or four times a year, but his goings out and comings in were visible to all, and his bona fides never doubted by those whose duty it was to know him.

One evening a stranger, a newly arrived commercial traveller, entered the dining-room just as the old gentleman was glancing through the bill of fare. He looked up, threw down the card as if it had scorched him, and hurried to his room. An hour later the writer found him cowering beneath the bed, muttering at intervals, "Izdibsky! Who does he want?"

Among the objections urged against the severe far-reaching I.D.B. laws was that it placed in the hands of the unscrupulous a terrible weapon for revenge. The possession of a raw diamond was in itself a penal offence, unless the possessor could prove his legal right. The onus of proof lay with the suspect, and the only possible explanation of possession was the production of a dealer's licence, or a permit, and legal proof of compliance with all the conditions and requirements of the law.

It is obvious that it would be easy for a person desirous of "putting away" another to drop an anonymous warning to the detectives, slip a raw diamond into the pocket of the victim, and await his arrest.

Couper, in his novel, makes such an incident a leading factor in the plot. A woman, anxious to get rid of her unofficial husband, slips stones into his pocket, gives in-

formation to the police, and he is duly and promptly arrested and sent to the Breakwater for seven years.

It would be idle to pretend that there have not been such cases in real life. How many it is impossible to say; but it must not be forgotten that the stock defence of the I.D.B. caught with the *corpus delicti* was usually a plea of innocence. "I don't know how the stones got into my possession; someone must have put them there out of revenge or spite." Such a defence sometimes had weight, if it was shown that there had been no attempt to hide the stones. It was useless urging the point, as the man did when it was pointed out that the stones were found in the toe of his unnecessarily long and pointed boots.

"The stones must have been put into my trousers pocket and slipped through a hole into my boot."

"But there was no hole in either pocket," says the Public Prosecutor.

"I can explain it," says the prisoner, "I remember my right boot was pinching me, so I took it off in a corner of the canteen, and I remember treading on something hard. It must have been the stones, and they stuck to my foot without my noticing them."

The theory that the police suspected and arrested right and left without rhyme or reason is only held by a few rabid opponents of everything appertaining to the diamond monopoly. Very few persons were placed under espionage without good reason. A man may have been watched for months before the detective placed a hand upon him, and when that happened it was safe to assume that the case was already proved, and conviction only a matter of certain legal formalities.

It is generally conceded by those whose knowledge was amplified by a well-balanced mind that the I.D.B. detectives as a body were a conscientious and honorable set of men. Naturally, now and then human weakness asserted itself, and there have been occasions when it was either

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clear or reasonably inferred that a detective in his anxiety to secure a conviction has strained a point. Fortunately the decision lay in the hands of competent persons. A special court which alone had the right of trying cases under the Diamond Law was always composed of three persons, one of whom must be a judge of the Supreme Court, the others magistrates or judicial commissioners. There was no jury to be cajoled or intimidated by counsel, or left to exercise its individual prejudices.

It is worthy of note that the records of these special courts have no case in which there was what might be termed good cause for suspicion against the justice of the verdict; that is, intelligent public opinion always confirmed the finding if not the sentence. There have been hard cases which have excited public sympathy for various reasons, and great and general regret that a point could not be strained in favour of the prisoner. But extenuating circumstances were almost invariably recognised by the court and taken into consideration in the sentence awarded.

It is a significant commentary upon the unpopularity of the Diamond Law, or alternately on the lax ethics of the crowd, that it was always a simple matter to procure funds by private subscription for the defence of a person charged under the I.D.B. Law, or for the assistance of any family or dependents who would be likely to suffer by his removal for a span. We are aware that this statement has been violently combated, and in the interest of the reputable portion of the Kimberley population it could be wished that those who object had more facts on their side. Unquestionably there was a large number of persons who rightly held I.D.B. in genuine detestation, but, unfortunately, they did not form the majority, which is not surprising in consideration of the cosmopolitan and adventurer opportunist character of the population of the diamond fields.

This story may be accepted as an illustration of one

aspect of the danger zone into which a man might enter in perfect innocence and have to pay a heavy penalty.

A young Englishman, of good character and antecedents, arrived in Kimberley and took a position with a leading storekeeper. Being a man of literary and musical tastes, he naturally sought affinities, and found one in a prosperous Jewish storekeeper, who had two pronounced idiosyncrasies for which he was well known. He was an ardent lover of music and the drama, and a vigorous denouncer, in and out of season, of I.D.B. He was particularly severe in his comments on members of his own religion who were associated with the business, being actuated, no doubt, by genuine regret that his race should be stigmatised by the crimes of a few unworthy members of it.

The young Englishman found congenial society in this eminently reputable citizen, and spent much time at his house enjoying their mutual musical performances and literary diversions.

One day, about a year after his arrival in Kimberley, the young man was arrested and charged with serious infractions of the Diamond Law. There was no room for question that he had got into bad company, was tempted, and, being just then pressed for money, yielded and fell. It was a very bad case, but there was just one weak point which might be used to advantage in the defence by an able advocate.

The day after the arrest a disreputable German Jew, a hanger-on of the racing and gambling gang, called on the storekeeper and boldly asked for £200 for the defence of the young man. The demand was resented with indignation, not so much because of the request and the amount as for the agent—a man of a class for whom the storekeeper had the greatest aversion. "Very well," was the impudent reply, "you'll be sorry. If you don't pay up and give him a chance on his only point, the prisoner

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is going to make a clean breast of it and tell the court that he has been buying for you ever since you brought him out for the purpose. Then all Kimberley will understand why you can never say anything too bad of a Yiddish I.D.B., yet spend all your spare time in the company of a Christian who is on the same game."

The storekeeper was stupefied. He was a man of the world, and recognised that there was damning weight in the insinuation that his denunciations were merely eye-dust. It never occurred to him to verify the story. He simply paid up, as hundreds have, in sheer fright at the prospect of a serious accusation.

Before he sold up his business to start afresh in Johannesburg he had been blackmailed to the extent of £2,000.

It was long afterwards that he learned that the young man was no party to the business. It was a well conceived plan on the part of two or three low-class Continental Jews to take a practical and profitable revenge upon one who had always treated them with contempt.

The circumstances were the more remarkable for the reason that Jews do not, as a rule, treat co-religionists so infamously; but this occurred in Kimberley at a period when the moral barometer was at its lowest, and climate affects some characters as well as some physiques.

There was a class on the diamond fields, the special creation of the I.D.B. laws, to whom the detectives had by necessity to devote the larger part of their attention. They were known as Runners, because of the nature of their business, which consisted in running across the border to the sanctuary of the Free State or Transvaal with parcels of stolen stones on behalf of their employers.

Many of the most successful of these runners were natives, but their ability was qualified by a serious drawback. They had a knack of disappearing when, after having inspired confidence by repeated successes, they

were entrusted with an extra large parcel for delivery to the agent or principal at Freetown or Christiana, in the Transvaal, and continued the journey to ports not mentioned in the bill of lading.

It was easy for a Kaffir to travel through the country. Thousands of them were constantly passing backwards and forwards between their kraals and the diamond fields. The pass law was not so rigorously administered as it was later, and with average luck the chances were in favour of the runaway getting through with his valuable freight.

It was very different with the majority of the white runners. To begin with, they were almost invariably in a state of chronic impecuniosity. They would not have taken up the work if they had not been, and their employers took care that their bondsmen should remain on the chain of necessity. The poor wretches were nearly always gamblers. The few pounds they made by running a parcel through were soon dissipated at the faro tables which abounded in Kimberley, and it was a novelty for any, even the most thrifty of a thriftless crowd, to have in his possession at one time sufficient ready cash to pay his expenses from Kimberley to any place of safety. Travelling was expensive. Ten pounds would not carry one far by post-cart, and as the driver could generally form a pretty accurate estimate of the character and object of his fare, he used his knowledge to squeeze the victim to the utmost.

Now and again a runner contrived to get away with a parcel of stones, reaching Natal or Delagoa Bay after enduring horrible privations. To attempt a journey to Capetown or any town in Cape Colony while carrying stolen stones would be folly, for the law and the telegraph wires were far reaching. The Free State was safe enough so long as one remained in it; but a desert island would have offered equally satisfactory facilities for turning the

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stolen goods to profitable account. The Natal Government was several times appealed to by Cape Colony to join in extirpating the I.D.B., but for various reasons the Natalians refused to co-operate, and to the last the Garden Colony remained the Alsatia of the diamond thieves.

One of the few runners who succeeded in getting through to Natal with a parcel of stones intended for Christiana confided his experiences to one of the authors.

He was sent off at the proverbial moment's notice, so that he had no opportunity of preparing and providing for a long journey, even if he had had the means. It was a custom of the baases to send their runners off instant. It was a wise, precautionary measure. This particular runner was in comparative affluence at the psychological moment. He had won about eight pounds at billiards from a newly arrived simpleton whom he was initiating into the "sporting life" of Kimberley. It was the largest amount of cash he had had in his pocket at any time when engaged in diamond running, and that fact, combined with the discovery that the parcel of stones he was carrying was worth at least a thousand pounds, decided him on making a dash for it.

He had in the frequent intervals of leisure thought out a plan of campaign, but as his knowledge of the country was confined to the environs of Kimberley he fully realised that he was engaging in no picnic—to quote his own expressive phrase.

Another great drawback was that he would have to make the run on foot instead of on horseback, as a pedestrian was less likely to excite the attention of the police patrols than a mounted man. This meant that unless he could turn one of the stones into cash or a horse he would have to walk some 450 miles or more before he reached the safety of Durban, where he believed he would have little difficulty in selling sufficient stones to provide him with his passage money to England.

In theory he would be quite safe from arrest when once he had entered the Free State or the Transvaal; but though the diamond detectives had no right to exercise their powers outside Cape Colony it was a fact that they often did. Many a runner has been followed for miles into the neutral ground, captured and deprived of his booty, the police leaving him with the scant satisfaction of the right of complaint on the score of illegal arrest. We do not recall a case in which this right was exercised, and it is more than probable that no runner would be so foolish as to avail himself of the questionable privilege.

It was also well known that several Field Cornets of the Free State and Transvaal were quite ready to lend a hand to the police if required and paid for it. One such was famous for his exploits in this direction. He used to justify his illegality on moral grounds; but there is good reason for believing that he found that sort of conscientiousness pay very well. The diamond magnates were not remiss in acknowledging services which assisted them in checking the scourge that was literally the plague of their lives.

There was another and always imminent source of danger. The "sticking up" and robbing of runners had become a regular and prosperous business. Gangs of desperadoes hung about the Free State and Transvaal borders waylaying runners, white and black, and nipping in the bud many a well-laid scheme that meant, if successful, a fortune for the author. One since famous I.D.B. failed to bring off a coup for which he had schemed and planned for three years, through the intervention of these solicitors on the highway.

He was riding through to Christiana en route for Natal with the proceeds of his years of successful diamond stealing and buying. His parcel, ingeniously hidden in his clothes, saddle, and even the horse's hoofs—the latter concealing six stones valued at over £500 apiece—was worth

at the lowest computation £10,000. He left Kimberley in the dark of the moon, ran the blockade of the police patrol successfully, though he was compelled to make a wide detour, and for a time lost his bearings. At sunrise he entered a narrow valley and came upon half a dozen men who had been camping out for the night and were in the act of saddling up. With foolish impetuosity he turned and rode back, but he had been recognised. These highwaymen knew most of the runners and their employers. Within five minutes he was a prisoner in a secluded kloof, watching his captors cutting up his baggage in search of diamonds, and listening, pale-faced, to a lurid description of the ingenious and painful means that would be resorted to to induce him to be more communicative.

They discovered all the stones hidden in and about his clothes and saddlery, shredding the thick portions of leather with a sharp shoemaker's knife evidently kept for the purpose. Then they made him strip stark naked, and examined his body after the approved and exhaustive methods applied by the official searchers of the Kaffirs on the mines. Their efforts were rewarded by a find of four valuable stones.

Satisfied with the results from the surface, they next proceeded to apply emetics to explore the interior, but succeeded only in making the poor wretch agonisingly ill. Leaving him to recover they examined the horse, having first endeavoured to elicit an admission that a stone had been administered in a bolus after a familiar fashion.

The victim did not admit the fact when narrating his experience, but it is probable that he showed sufficient concern regarding the horse to excite suspicion, for the brigands decided to kill the animal and hold a post-mortem.

They shot the poor brute and opened its stomach, but, finding nothing, abandoned the search. They had already

removed the shoes, but the hiding had been effected so skilfully that the stones were not discovered. So thorough was the search that they actually cut open every lump in the animal's skin. A fly, corresponding to the English dragon fly, lays its eggs in the hides of African horses and cattle, producing a swelling sometimes as large as a haricot bean. These protuberances have, with complete success, occasionally been utilised as hiding-places for diamonds, though the trick soon became known to the diamond detectives, and many a wretched horse and trek ox have been needlessly tortured in the search for contraband.

Being now satisfied that they had secured all that was possible the brigands prepared to ride off. They treated their victim as well as their means permitted, giving him brandy and a little food, and instructions how to find the high road to Christiana, where they said he would probably come upon a wagon either going to or from Kimberley. They also gave him three sovereigns, and with a heartfelt vote of thanks bade him good-bye.

Unfortunately, he had not sufficient self-control to resist attempting to recover his diamonds from the hoofs of the dead horse until the party was out of sight. He was busy with a pocket-knife exhuming the stones when the sound of riders startled him. The thieves had noticed him on his knees at the carcass, and, suspecting shrewdly, returned. They dissected the hoofs in record time, found what they had hoped for, and retired only after a long debate as to whether it would not pay to try a little torture on their victim.

"There's no knowing what he may have about himself or the horse yet," said the most persistent member of the gang, remarking several times: "I know a way of making a graven image talk."

What that way was he did not reveal. Perhaps some day he may, for he is still living, and flourishing, a regret-

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table illustration of the truth of the Biblical assurance that the wicked spread like a green bay tree.

But to return to our defaulting runner. His narrative is worth printing, because it was in the main typical of the adventure of others who preceded or succeeded him in an effort to rob a thief and get away with the plunder.

His outfit consisted of a muzzle-loading shot-gun, the stock of which had been neatly bored to receive the diamonds, a haversack containing provisions, and the etceteras that a man out for a day's rough shooting would be likely to carry. He was accompanied by a mongrel dog, and altogether looked the part he was playing. His employer had supplied him with five pounds in silver, and the scheme was to make his way into the veld by a route that did not lead to his actual goal; then when well out of probable sight of prowling police patrols, he was to strike for the main road to the Transvaal, and rely on luck for getting a lift on a traveller's buggy or even a Boer wagon.

The distance from Kimberley to Christiana as the crow flies is roughly sixty miles, but, allowing for detours, it would be nearer eighty, and occupy four or even five days if no wheels became available. His instructions were to deliver the stones to the agent of his employer, who was partner and brother, and resided, as many of the I.D.B. agents did, in the dreary little dorp that will go down in history as the rendezvous of more and greater rascals than any spot of corresponding size and age in the world.

As a matter of course, the runaway had no intention of going to Christiana. His plan was to travel eastward across the Free State, via Bloemfontein, Winburg, Bethlehem, and Harrismith, thence across the Drakensberg by Van Reenan's Pass into Natal. Four hundred and fifty miles mainly through sparsely inhabited country was the journey undertaken with a light heart by a narrow-chested youth of two-and-twenty, who until a year before had

regarded a walk from Hackney to the Crystal Palace as a feat worth retailing whenever athletic prowess was the subject of conversation.

To this must be added the very serious handicap of ignorance of the language spoken by the farmers en route, on whom he would be dependent for accommodation at night, equal ignorance of the roads, and of that veld-lore which smooths the path of the expert, and inability to ride even if provided with a horse.

The one point in his favour was the possession of thirteen pounds, mostly in silver. In those days five shillings went a long way in Boerdom, as yet unspoiled by contact with gold and diamonds. The greatest disadvantage under which he laboured, though he was as yet unaware of it, was being on foot. The Boer holds the pedestrian in light esteem.

"Father!" shouts the hawk-eyed Afrikaner juvenile playing on the stoep of the farmhouse, "here comes a stranger."

"On horse or foot?" queries Hans.

"On foot."

"Then come in and shut the door."

The horseless traveller may knock in vain at that inhospitable homestead. If he be experienced in the ways of the people he will shout through the crannies a story of having left his horse dead on the veld, and ostentatiously offer to buy the best animal on the farm. Our traveller knew nothing of this, and spent the first night shivering in a dry sluit nursing his hungry dog for the warmth its bony body gave.

"And me with thirteen quid and a thousand pounds' worth of diamonds," was the comment of the narrator. "I had often heard preachers say that money and jewels were dross, but I never knew what it meant till that night."

In the morning hunger drove him to the farmhouse. He opened overtures by offering a shilling to an unkempt

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little girl who ran from him in terror. The father came out, was fascinated by the sight of the shillings the traveller showed, and relaxed. The two could not speak each other's language, but the shillings acted as effective interpreters. Food and a rest, both very primitive, were proffered, and the journey was resumed, the host drawing with a burnt stick on a box-lid a rough map which gave the traveller a fair idea of his route. The Boer evidently could not write, but the ingenuity of the illiterate came to his aid when he wished to indicate that at a certain spot was a river to be crossed: he spat copiously, and used the fluid to indicate where the current was strong or fordable.

Before the sun was at its best the young man had learned that curious fact in dynamics that a gun which weighs ten pounds early in the morning approximates as many hundredweights by noon. He resolved to get rid of it, and spent several hours labouring with a small pocket-knife to cut away the hard walnut stock to reach the diamonds. He had just finished when two Kaffirs, apparently returning from the mines, one of whom spoke a little English, came up, and promptly offered a sovereign for the disfigured firearm. The offer was taken, and the pair departed in high spirits. So did the runner. He had been long enough in Kimberley to have caught that fatalistic spirit which pervades all mining camps. He saw in the incident proof that his luck was in, and he declares that it put new life and courage into him. Even superstitions may have a practical use.

The next two days were uneventful but not unsatisfactory. He got a ten-mile lift on a wagon in charge of three Kaffirs travelling partly towards Bloemfontein, was hospitably entertained by an English-speaking Boer at the cost of sixpence to each of three dirty children, and was directed to a probable resting-place for the ensuing night.

Not liking the look of a visitor at the farmhouse, he passed a bad night keeping guard over his treasure and

meditating schemes for hiding it more securely. During the next day, having reached Bloemfontein, he put up at a wayside hostel, and sewed the stones into various parts of his clothes. Before he reached Durban he had altered the arrangement nearly a dozen times. The fear of losing the diamonds became a haunting dread. Other I.D.B.'s have confessed to a similar experience. However ingenious and apparently safe the hiding-place, there is always an irresistible desire to change it.

Detectives of experience have claimed that they can generally tell by scrutinising the face of a subject whether he has anything concealed on or near him. The ever-present consciousness, the fear of detection and the necessity for caution produce a peculiar furtive, anxious expression about the eyes difficult to describe, but once recognised never forgotten. Only two or three successful and inveterate I.D.B.'s had the gift of concealing their emotions. One of them enjoyed exciting the suspicions of the detectives, and never minded the annoyance and physical inconvenience attendant on the searching process so long as he had the last laugh. He carried out his bat in the game after being arrested and searched over fifty times.

At the village of Bethlehem the runner encountered an entertaining and friendly stranger in the person of that romantic character around whom so much amusing fiction has been woven, "Scotty" Smith. The redoubtable adventurer had only a week before performed that daringly audacious feat which anticipated the German Captain Koepenick by a quarter of a century: He had met the newly appointed landdrost of Ventersdorp in the Transvaal on the way to take up his duties. Having elicited that the new official was quite unknown in the district over which he was to have magisterial control, he made him drunk, left him asleep in bed at a wayside hotel, carried off his horse and that of the hotel keeper, also certain

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documents, and made a quick passage to Ventersdorp. There he presented himself as the real Simon Pure, audited the books, took charge of the very little cash in the office, and held a jail delivery, releasing a former colleague who was being detained in tronk pending an inquiry into an unsatisfactory horse transaction.

The runner did not know "Scotty" at the time, but found out later that the genial fellow-traveller who shared his bedroom that night was the most sought-after person in South Africa. For once Scotty's marvellous prescience and power of gauging the value of a stranger were at fault or not exercised. He failed to recognise in the footsore Britisher an I.D.B. runner well worth "running the rule over." It is not altogether certain that, even if he had guessed the truth, Scotty would have asserted his mastership by force of arms. There was a wondrous amount of human nature of an agreeable brand in this South African Captain Starlight. He often acted the part accredited to Robin Hood, by robbing the rich for the benefit of the poor. It is more than probable that, had he known what was hidden in those ragged clothes, he would have tendered useful advice on the best method of turning the stones into cash, and have been content with a fair commission. Or he might have imparted a useful lesson by teaching the young man an amusing game at cards, with the stones as stakes.

At Bethlehem the traveller arranged with a Natal transport rider to travel with him to Ladysmith for three pounds, and, on arriving there, he had sufficient cash left to refit with decent clothes and journey in comparative comfort to Durban.

There he sought out a buyer of stolen stones of whom he had heard in Kimberley, and obtained an insight into the methods by which these gentry contrived to get rich by crime, yet maintain the respect of the community.

The man to whom he went was a prosperous store-

keeper and a power in local politics. He began by repudiating all knowledge of, or connection with, Kimberley and its devious ways, and actually posed as moral mentor by giving the young man good advice and warning him not to continue the dangerous business. As a very special and exceptional favour, by way of affording him an opportunity of getting out of the country, he would strain a point by finding a purchaser for the stones, but he warned him that the probabilities were that no such person would be found. He required a few days in which to make inquiries, and advised the young man under no circumstances to offer the stones to anyone.

"You probably are not aware," he said, "that the Natal Government have at last agreed to join the Cape in stopping I.D.B., and they are waiting for the chance to catch a person like yourself and hand him over to the Kimberley police by way of showing the Cape Government that they mean business."

In fine, he fairly scared the runner, who began to think he had made the mistake of his life in robbing his baas. The moralist was careful to ascertain what cash the young man had, then advised him to stay quietly at an hotel he recommended, without mentioning that it was the most expensive in town, and run by a man who knew an I.D.B. at sight and squeezed him mercilessly. The object was to reduce the victim to impecuniosity by bleeding him, weary him by delay, and then make a ridiculous offer for the stones, which he would probably accept in sheer desperation.

The young man, knowing and suspecting nothing, fell into the trap. He was kept idle in Durban for a week, during which his money melted and the hotel-keeper became importunate. Appeals to the moralist were useless. He refused to see the man, except for a moment, and then warned him of the danger of appearing much in public as he was already suspected and marked. Next, a

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prospective purchaser was introduced, and for another week this pair played the game of Spenlow and Jorkins. Spenlow was most anxious to deal, he said, but Jorkins was adamant. Jorkins, when interviewed, put the blame upon Spenlow, and their dupe was just on the verge of yielding by sacrificing the parcel for £200 when luck turned.

In the hotel bar one day he met a man whom he had known at Kimberley. He also was an I.D.B., and made no secret of it. In a moment of confidence, begotten of whisky, the runner showed a few stones, and found that there was honour among some thieves. His new acquaintance took him to a highly respectable citizen engaged in the transport riding business, and who was, of course, also a man of light and leading in the community. He made a fair offer for part of the parcel, sufficient to clear off all liabilities and pay passage to England, and gave the address of a trustworthy buyer in London.

The offer was accepted, and the runner cleared £700 out of the transaction, the parcel in its entirety having produced £1,250. The cost of getting it through in commission and travelling expenses was £500, the result of ignorance of the trade.

A year later the young man arrived in Durban again with a parcel from Kimberley. His old employer whom he had robbed was serving a seven-year sentence on the Breakwater at Cape Town. This time the journey to the coast had been made in comparative luxury, the result of dearly bought experience, and instead of Spenlow and Jorkins, who were still in the business, and respectable and respected, he had the choice of twenty substantial buyers, who bid freely one against the other.

It was the last parcel he ever handled. The compound system and the amalgamation of the diamond mines had killed the business.

The ex-runner died in his native English village, to

which he retired and presented a mission-hall and reading-room. He also was much respected.

There is an almost monotonous similarity about the many stories connected with I.D.B. As in the case of a collection of jokes and funny anecdotes, one or two stand out prominently through their originality, and overshadow all the others, which are forgotten, because, in comparison with the few good ones, they are commonplace. There are a certain number of these stories which have become classic. Through constant repetition they have worn threadbare, and by their striking audacity or humour have made pointless others perhaps equally worth telling.

To appreciate these records of successful rascality, it is necessary to possess that moral "kink" which enables so many otherwise worthy people to rejoice secretly at the triumph of brains or cunning over organised law and order. It is also essential for the proper understanding of the points that raise the laugh and evoke applause to know something of the process of I.D.B.

The genesis was the Kaffir employee. His opportunities were as fifty to one against the white, for reasons before explained and obvious. He was the man on the spot all the time, and for each pair of eyes belonging to whites on the look out, either as thieves or as watchers on behalf of the owners, there were hundreds of keen and cunning pairs in black heads. The diamond might be found in the process of pick-and-shovel work in the hole whence the blue and yellow clay was extracted, but it was principally discovered on the floors—the name given to the large open spaces where the diamond-bearing rock was exposed for weeks or months to the disintegrating process of nature known as weathering. In course of time the hard rock, or solid clay, cracked and crumbled and exposed the gems, that looked like nothing so much as pieces of rock-salt or alum, perhaps most like the latter. It was a

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common trick for swindlers to carry a piece of alum that had been sucked into octahedron shape, and foist it upon some guileless newcomer as a genuine stone. The secret and necessarily hurried business of exchanging a stone for cash favoured the deception, since it allowed no time for close examination. The usual method was to include several of these bogus stones in a small parcel of genuine raw diamonds, taking care that they should not be sufficiently large to invite special testing. More than one experienced I.D.B. has been completely deceived by this trick; and the practical joker mentioned in this chapter on two or three occasions added to the humiliation of the detectives and his own delight by allowing himself to be caught in the act of buying alum-diamonds.

When the Kaffir had secured a stone, his first business was to conceal it from the watchful eyes of the baas, if working on a small claim, or of the guards if employed on a large mine. The safest and commonest method was to swallow and recover it later with the assistance of certain simple drugs. Failing that, a hundred ingenious methods were resorted to, some so surprisingly audacious that one may well be excused for being incredulous. Until the close segregation of the compound system rendered such expedients futile, a small gash in some not too prominent part of the body was made the receptacle. One of the writers had once in his employ an old native who had spent some years on the mines before the amalgamation. His body was covered with scars, the sites of self-inflicted wounds, over thirty of them being easily counted. He claimed to be one of the first to practise this painful form of smuggling, and once got away with a stone which a tradition of the fields asserted was sold in London for £15,000. He arranged with another native a bogus quarrel, in the course of which he received an adroitly placed cut on the head with an assegai which lifted up a slice of the skin. Beneath this he quickly slipped the

stone, plastered the wound with wet clay, and a month later went to the I.D.B. who bought most of his stones and haggled for a big price, half of which was to be paid before he would submit to have the stone extracted.

The I.D.B., knowing his man and forming an opinion of the size of the stone by the lump which covered it, agreed. The story goes that the wife of the I.D.B. essayed the extraction process with a penknife, but that the Kaffir shied at amateur surgery, and insisted on the operation being performed by a witch-doctor. By way of compromise, the services of a local chemist were accepted, and the job completed to everybody's satisfaction.

As the boy named a different amount as the price he received for the stone each time he told the story, we can only say that the figure ranged from £30 to £50.

The point of many stories of diamond stealing is the disparity between the price paid to the native thief and that obtained by the receiver. Doubtless there were, in the early days, some amazing cases, the natural result of the Kaffir's ignorance of values. But he soon gained experience, and was able to form a fairly accurate estimate of the probable worth of a stone to an illicit buyer. He also took advantage of the competition between the I.D.B.'s. The characters of all of them were known and discussed among the natives, just as the small betting-man knows and patronises the bookmaker who lays the most liberal odds. Not from any sense of fairness, but from motives of policy, regular buyers treated the Kaffirs fairly, for it would have been fatal to a buyer's business to have the word passed round the camp by the natives that he was "no good." There was no recognised scale of prices. The Kaffir usually said what he wanted for a stone, probably after consultation with his fellows, and the I.D.B. had either to take it or leave it. On the average, the Kaffir probably received from 10 to 15 per cent. of the price the I.D.B. got; but more frequently than not the buyer made his big

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profits out of extra large and pure stones, the native not being a capable judge of quality. He was more impressed by quantity.

Many of the early I.D.B.'s had a regular staff of boys working for them at different claims. These brought all they could get away with, and accepted practically what was offered. But the I.D.B. always contrived to have some hold upon his agents. He advanced them small sums for various purposes, supplied them with clothes and small luxuries dear to most natives, and generally dry-nursed them.

One man had for three years four extremely clever Kaffir diamond thieves under his thumb. They had escaped with his connivance from the gaol of Graaf Reinet, in Cape Colony, where they were awaiting a trial certain to result in several years' imprisonment and many lashes. Under threat of delivering them up to justice, he kept them bound until the Kimberley detectives caught them with stones in their possession, and they were deported to the Breakwater for seven years apiece. It was believed that the arrest was the work of a jealous rival I.D.B.

Successful native diamond thieves formed, fortunately, a very small proportion of the total number employed on the diggings. The penalties weighed more with most than the prospect of gain; further, it was only a few who could speak sufficient Dutch or English to carry out the negotiations for the sale of their plunder. There grew up, therefore, a class of Kaffir who made a business of becoming receiver and agent for natives who found stones but had not the knowledge or ability to sell them. The career of these middlemen was usually brief, for they soon became known to the police, and succumbed to the superior machinery and resources of the whites. A few of them were sensible enough to be content with a dozen or so successful deals, and then return to their kraals, but they were very few.

The I.D.B. at the apex of the business was of necessity a man able to command a fair amount of ready cash. He kept well in the background, leaving all the work and risk to his agents—generally broken-down young fellows who had come to the fields as failures from home, holding extravagant and impossible notions as to the ease of making a fortune without hard work. It has been freely asserted that several of those whose names have been associated with wholesale and successful I.D.B. made a practice of importing young men from England for the express purpose of utilising them as tools in the business. There is probably more truth in this than in many rumours and *on dits* that reflect upon the Past of Present successes.

The *modus operandi* was uniform. The youngster would be brought out, whole or part carriage paid, under promise of lucrative employment. For a few months the new-comer would probably be engaged in some light work created for him by the I.D.B. with the aid of a confederate. The job was always light, affording ample time for the cultivation of such of the amusements and relaxations of Kimberley as most appealed to the victim. As his salary was of the nominal type pending increase of qualifications, he soon found himself unable to keep pace with his acquaintances. Every inducement was given him to spend all and get into debt, till the inevitable happened. The philanthropic I.D.B., who had helped him out of a tight corner several times, suddenly and unexpectedly changed his attitude. He refused, more in sorrow than in anger, to be financial godfather any longer. The subject had proved unworthy, and as dismissal from the bogus job followed the retirement of the I.D.B. from the money-lending branch of his philanthropic business, the young man had perforce to join the crowd of broken hangers-on at bars and other places where there was a prospect of picking up a stray meal or the means of getting one. At a time when everybody talked diamonds and little else, it

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was an easy transition into the company of those who were ever on the look-out for a chance to "get hold of a stone cheap." It is useless attempting to gloss over the facts by pretending that the cosmopolitan crowd who formed nineteen-twentieths of the population of the Fields were not instinctively thieves. There might be divergence of opinion as to the word, but no man who knew Kimberley in those days would deny that the majority of the inhabitants were I.D.B.'s at heart. They would be the first to set the law in motion against a man who stole a diamond from the shirt-front or finger of another, but they made a hazy differentiation between a crime of that sort and purchasing a stone which had not formally passed into the possession of the claim- or mine-owner. Therefore, the man who would, if he could, have bought for himself did not scruple to buy on commission for another. It was a delightfully Gilbertian school of moral ethics, in which the young man just out found himself at Kimberley in the halcyon days.

It must be admitted that the temptation would have been great to the most morally disposed; to the average man, driven by cruel necessity, it was irresistible. Hence came it that, despite frequent—almost regular—convictions of white agents and runners, there were never lacking volunteers eager to step into the vacancy. One I.D.B. has boasted—and it is to be feared truthfully—that on the day following the arrest of one of his cleverest buyers and runners, he received over thirty applications for the vacant job; "and only one of them was a police-trap," he would add gleefully.

The fate of the small fry engaged in I.D.B. was closely analogous to that of the little men who make horse-racing a vocation. The vast majority end up badly, but all are kept in heart by ardent faith in their luck. They all quote sample cases of men like themselves, who brought off a big coup after a long run of ill-luck, and their faith in that

long-expected 100 to 1 chance is unshaken by scores of defeats and disappointments.

In like manner, the I.D.B. quoted leading cases. There was the story of the clerk in the coach-office, who arrived to take up his duty on Monday, and booked his own return within a week on the strength of having bought a stone worth £2,000 for £5. Dozens of men, well dressed and carrying all those outward and visible signs of opulence which dazzle the vulgar, passed every hour, any one of whom could be identified as having literally starved on the streets within a period of twelve months past.

"A man is a fool to get caught buying a stone; he would be a greater fool not to risk it," was an axiom accepted by most, and it was not want of will, but of opportunity, that kept most men—and women—out of the game.

Mr. T. Eliot, formerly Secretary to the Legislative Council of Griqualand West, tells a story that illustrates the matter-of-course attitude of the average native and Kimberleyite towards diamond stealing.

A native one day boldly entered his office and offered to sell him a stone which he produced, asking £5 for it. Mr. Eliot was so taken aback by the audacity of the native that he regarded the thing as a joke. He looked at the stone, and its size, combined with his own comparative unfamiliarity with raw diamonds, induced the belief that it was bogus, and that the Kaffir had been sent by way of a joke by one of his brother officials.

Acting on this presumption, Mr. Eliot asked, "Why do you bring this to me?"

"Because you are a Government baas and can pay most money," was the reply.

This confirmed the suspicion that he was having his leg pulled, so Mr. Eliot sent the boy off.

Later he heard that the boy had sold the stone to a certain digger generally suspected of possessing more

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diamonds than his claim yielded. Being on sufficiently confidential terms, he, on opportunity offering, taxed the digger with having acquired that particular diamond, and got an affirmative reply.

"What did you get for it?"

"Half of £15,000, and good security for the balance."

"And what did you give the Kaffir?"

"He asked five; but I had only four sovereigns and a shilling, so he took that."

This Arabian Nights-like story is vouched for by Mr. Eliot.

It has always been a matter of surprise to the average stay-at-home person, on hearing that certain influential people had been associated with I.D.B., that they had never been caught. This fact has been used as an argument against the story being probable.

The difficulty is removed when it is known that the chiefs of the business—the men who found the money to purchase stones and took the lion's share of the plunder—took none of the risk. They never handled, and perhaps never saw, a fraction of the stones they purchased. They worked entirely through trusted agents. There was no legal means of getting at a man for making a profit out of the business unless he was proved to have stones actually in his possession, and the I.D.B. who knew his business took care never to leave an opening of that sort.

Of course, those who worked claims or washed debris could purchase with impunity. Having bought a stolen stone, they promptly registered it as having been found on their own ground, and it was a very difficult thing to prove otherwise. The only chance the police had was to put such men under rigorous observation, and so prevent possible thieves having access to them. But in a circumscribed area like the diamond fields a man soon found that he was being watched, and acted accordingly.

Even if an agent wished to implicate his employer, he

would have found it difficult, if not impossible. The money given him for the purchase of stones would reach him by a circuitous and innocent-looking route. One buyer used to go to a storekeeper and ask him to cash a cheque drawn on the buyer's own account. The storekeeper handed over the cash as agent for the chief I.D.B., and used his discretion about paying in the cheque. Such a transaction would baffle detection. It is probable that the storekeeper settled up with a third, or even fourth, person representing the chief of the business.

The one outstanding, ever-present danger was the possession of stolen diamonds. It was not always easy or possible to get rid of stones immediately after they had been purchased, and the powers of search possessed by the diamond detective were practically unlimited. They would pounce down upon a suspect at any and every unlikely and unreasonable hour, and subject him and his to a search so minute and exhaustive that, as one descriptive writer expressed it, they could discover the symptoms of small-pox a week before they appeared on the skin. Long experience made them experts in knowing what to avoid. They often went to the hiding-place with a directness that suggested prior knowledge. In the ordinary mind, the problem of concealing a dozen diamonds no larger than peas may seem child's play; but when the hide has to be unguessed by men whose lives are spent in anticipating the secreting process, the magnitude of the task becomes stupendous. Given time sufficient, the chances of an ordinary person hiding a diamond in an average house of Kimberley pattern in a spot that a diamond detective will not discover are very remote. Every new trick that is discovered adds to the education of the detective, and tells against succeeding diamond thieves.

One ingenious hide did defy detection to the very end, and was only discovered by accident long after the man who invented it had retired from business.

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He was an I.D.B. on a large scale, and ran a small wayside hotel just outside Kimberley. The position of the place, on the bare, open veld, rendered surprise visits extremely difficult, yet, despite this advantage, the place was several times rushed by the detectives. But the most exhaustive search produced never a stone; known diamond thieves have been followed to the door, seen to pass over the stones to the proprietor, yet on searching him and his place nothing was ever found. More than fifty stones sold to him by police native traps disappeared, and were never recovered. The only piece of evidence remarked by the detectives was that the I.D.B. always conducted his buying seated at an ordinary desk in a small glass-compartmented recess, having an ordinary window at his left hand, which was always wide open at the top. The suggestion was that the position had been chosen because of the view it gave all round.

When the I.D.B. retired, his hotel was sold and partially demolished by the new proprietor. The window at which the I.D.B. used to sit looked on to a six-foot passage and a corrugated iron stable about nine feet high to the roof, which was nearly flat.

On pulling down this stable a diamond was found embedded in the gutter-trough which caught the water from the roof. This water was carried away by an ordinary down pipe. On this pipe being examined, a fine wire sieve was found in the end within a few inches of the ground, and the mystery was solved.

When he had received stones, the I.D.B., by a flick of thumb and finger, as boys shoot off marbles, fired them out of the window on to the roof of the stable only six feet distant. In the ordinary course, they would roll or be carried by the rain down the smooth iron roof into the trough, thence into the wire-guarded pipe, where they were recovered at leisure.

It was afterwards remembered that during the dry

season the I.D.B. had often been noticed turning a hose on to the stable roof. His explanation was that the dust collected there and blew into the window. The probable explanation is that he was assisting lethargic stones on their way to the trough.

It is admitted by experts that the open roof of a stable was about the last place the most painstaking and suspicious diamond detective would search on a domiciliary visit.

Considering how ingenious and apparently detection-proof were the large number of smuggling devices that failed to escape the detectives, one cannot but wonder what were those that effected their object. We are familiar with many of these, but they must form a very small part of the sum total. If all were known, it is probable that it would be found that the simplest tricks proved most successful.

One of them did not get the stones through, but it saved the quick-witted inventor from conviction. He had just got possession of a valuable stone, which had been passed rapidly to him by arrangement as he left a canteen. Three detectives were in waiting, and as he stepped into the street he was seized and led away, with his arms firmly gripped by a man on each side. On being searched at the station, which was only a few yards from the scene of the capture, nothing incriminating was found upon him. The detectives had seen the transaction, and were so convinced that he had not swallowed the stone that they did not resort to the usual means of recovering it. The only theory was that the diamond had been dropped at the moment of the arrest. The prisoner wisely held his tongue, and neither by act nor word offered any assistance to the perplexed detectives. After a second thorough search, lasting over an hour, he was perforce released.

The secret came out next day, when one of the detectives found in his side coat-pocket a large diamond. The I.D.B. had slipped it in at the moment before his arms

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were seized; in fact, as he later admitted, as his arm was being grasped by the detective. His triumph was short-lived. He was trapped successfully a few days later, and served five years.

A simple method of transferring stones to an accomplice was practised by a famous I.D.B., who amassed a fortune without once having to undergo the indignity of arrest and search. His sleeping-partner, but very active and alert treasurer and custodian of his illicitly acquired stones, was a barmaid, who afterwards became his wife. The I.D.B. called in at regular periods, and ordered such drinks as his naturally parsimonious disposition and the day's luck or ill-luck suggested. They ranged from champagne to beer. When a bottle of stout was called for, the barmaid understood the signal. The I.D.B. would drink about half of it, engage in conversation with someone in the bar, and either go off hurriedly, after glancing at his watch, or accept the offer of someone to take a drink. In either case, he did not finish the stout. This the barmaid would put apparently among the dirty glasses awaiting washing, but actually in a place of safety, for she knew that diamonds had been dropped into it from the mouth of the I.D.B.

Accident, or what a mining man would prefer to call luck, was responsible on more than one occasion for a good find by the detectives. A man arrived from Kimberley and put up at a Cape Town hotel. There he was recognised by a customer, who declared that he had lost a pair of boots when staying at the hotel some months before when the Kimberley man shared his room. The boots, he asserted, were at that moment on the feet of the man he accused. There were indignant denials; the manager was called, but failed to identify the accused as having been in the hotel before. The aggrieved person refused to be satisfied, and called the police authority to go over his kit. The accused gave them permission to

overhaul his kit, and they made a rummage. Among the things handled was a double-barrelled shot-gun. The constable, being a cautious person, looked closely to make sure that the weapon was not loaded, and noticed that both barrels were plugged. They were literally choked with raw diamonds. The Kimberley police confessed that they had never entertained any suspicion of this man.

The largest parcel of diamonds ever captured at one time would have been got through but for an accident. Three men, leaving Kimberley with a wagon for the Free State, were under suspicion and observation. The detectives made no sign until the wagon had got well out of the town on to the veld, where the intended search could be made without a crowd of onlookers. Just on the Free State border, the police patrol came up and began a systematic and microscopic search. They even cut the dissel-boom—or wagon-pole—into small pieces, and sounded or prodded every part of the wagon large enough to conceal a stone. They expected to find an unusually large parcel, hence their extra pains; but nothing rewarded their efforts, and after two hours' hard work they retired. On the way, one of the detectives remembered that he had left a knife or gimlet on the wagon, and returned for it. He found the men ruefully repairing the damage as well as they could, and replenishing the water in the water-kid, which had been emptied out in the search. The detective asked for a drink, and, in helping himself, was struck with something odd about the large bung which closed the kid. He examined closer, and found a packet nailed to the bung—in fact, it was the bung—one solid mass of pitch containing four pounds' weight of extra fine stones.

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